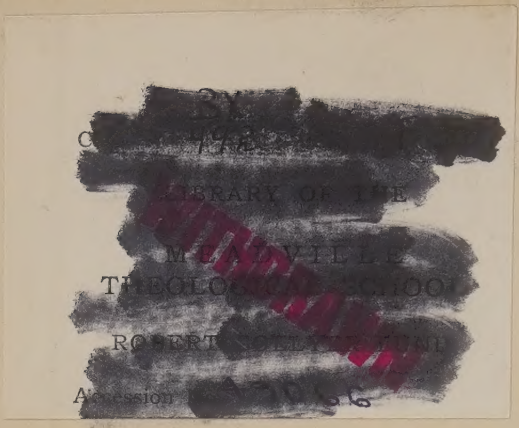
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The Russian Church since the Revolution

BY

G. P. FEDOTOFF

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PREFACE

After a total suspension of news from Russia lasting between twenty-four and forty-eight hours, news reached England of the Revolution and the abdication of the Tsar. I remember going to my club and witnessing the enthusiasm of the members: "Have you heard the glorious news from Russia?" My suggestion that it was a great disaster was received with pitying incredulity, and for months afterwards the censorship imposed upon the Press the obligation of "writing up" the Revolution.

Three months later, in a postcript to *Birkbeck and the Russian Church* (S.P.C.K., 1917), I attempted to appraise the effect on the Church of the great change in its position. But neither I nor any other individual at that time could foresee the extent of the catastrophe or could believe that it presaged the most ferocious attack upon Christianity that the world has ever seen.

The surviving Bishops of Russia generally speak with quiet confidence of the future—they know their people, and the failure of the Bolsheviks to tear Christianity out of their hearts is evident; the frontal attack on the Church has been largely abandoned. The methods now followed are more sinister, if less direct. In the first place, all training of candidates for the ministry has been rendered impossible; what will happen when clergy and sacrament alike disappear?

Secondly, every effort has been made to divide Christians, efforts rendered easy by the paralyzing of the episcopate: when the Bishops are out of their prisons or exile their administration is rendered impossible. The Patriarch Tikhon, when alive, was so absolutely in the hands of his gaolers that nobody outside, or even inside, Russia knew what weight to give to his utterances. Hence, not only the schisms provoked in the unhappy country itself, but the divisions amongst the *emigrés*. All that we of the Anglican Communion can do is to show our impartial sympathy for all who, in circumstances of unparalleled difficulty, are working for the salvation of Christianity in Russia; it would be presumptuous of us to judge between them. With the Hierarchs of the Eastern Church rests a greater responsibility, but even they are compelled to act with caution, and it must be remembered that the Treaty of Lausanne has placed the Œcumenical Patriarch himself in a position of very great difficulty.

That brings me to the final consideration. What is the nature of the force which is making this relentless attack, not only on Christianity, but against the very idea of God, in widely different quarters of the globe —Russia, Turkey, Mexico? In what other countries will the same attack appear? That it is in a very real sense supernatural is abundantly clear. Is it the coming of Antichrist? And if so, how will our portion of the Christian family sustain the attack? Are we prepared, like our Russian brothers and sisters, to lay down our lives, if need be, for Him Who bought us with His precious Blood?

Monsieur Fedotoff was educated in the University

of Petrograd and was subsequently professor of Medieval History in the Universities of Saratoff and Petrograd. He remained in Russia till 1925, and speaks, therefore, with a very complete knowledge of eight years of the great persecution. He belongs to that section of the Russian Church in exile which is gathered round the Metropolitan Eulogie in Paris, and sees things from that point of view; he is now teaching in the Russian Theological Institute in that city. He may be regarded, therefore, as a competent and trustworthy witness, and he writes with moderation and restraint. I trust his little work will have a wide circulation in this country.

ATHELSTAN RILEY.

PENTECOST, 1928.

THE RUSSIAN CHURCH SINCE THE REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

THE REVOLUTION OF 1917 AND THE MOSCOW SOBOR

THE doctrine and the ritual of the Russian Church have for centuries maintained a bond between the Church and the sovereign power in the State. This was particularly true during the period of the autocratic monarchy, which in theory and practice was a theocracy, wherein the "anointed" Tsar was at once the political sovereign and, like the Byzantine emperors, the ruler of the spiritual community, the Church. When, therefore, the Revolution of 1917 deposed the Tsar, a great breach was made not only in the political organization of the State, but in the deeper conceptions of the Church and in its ritual, for no longer could the Emperor's name be remembered at the appointed places in the service, and no "Provisional Government" or elected council could possibly be considered a substitute or successor to this half-spiritual, half-political position. There is all the more reason for astonishment that the Church should so quickly adapt itself to new conditions and so loyally accept the new authority.

In explanation of this fact one must point to two circumstances. In the first place, the Russian Church, notwithstanding its connection with the Government, or, indeed, because of this connection, was non-political. There was no clerical party in the political arena. Granting "unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," the Church made no attempt to influence political policies, but rested content with the strength afforded by State protection. An exception must necessarily be made of a few individual bishops and priests. Under the last Tsar, a few bishops endeavoured to save the régime from the oncoming revolution by lending their support to parties of the extreme right—the Union of the Russian People, and others. The names of these hierarchs were known to all Russia, but they neither represented nor had had great influence on the Church. The Russian priest retained his age-long characteristics; modest, simple, even submissive, he occupied himself almost exclusively with services of worship, not attempting to influence social or political life. Hence the Russian radical intelligentzia, though largely atheistic, was quite without hostility to the Church, and even looked upon the clergy and ceremonies with toleration and a certain degree of reverence.

The second reason for the Church's undisturbedly accepting the revolution lay in the fact that the moral breakdown of the régime during the last few years had touched the Church in its weakest place. It was a secret to no one that the appointment of bishops, even the very membership of the Holy Synod, was effected by the influence of Rasputin, who was all-powerful at Court. Such a lowering of the position

of the Church was unbearable even to the most fanatical defenders of the autocracy among the bishops, such as Hermogen and Theophan.

Of the White (married) clergy, about a hundred belonged to a small democratic group which enthusiastically welcomed the revolution. There were others who long had shared the liberating aspirations of the intelligentzia, uniting with them in this struggle as early as 1905, and meeting with them for a number of years in the liberal "Religious Philosophical Society." Immediately after the overthrow of the old régime, there was organized in Petrograd "The Union of Democratic Clergy," which conducted Christian propaganda among the revolutionary workmen in the suburbs, and wrote on their banner "A free Church in a free State." In many provincial cities the old antagonism of the parish clergy, principally village priests, to the monastic episcopacy came out into the open. In stormy diocesan conferences deacons and readers boldly brought up the offences of their "Lordships," who but yesterday had inspired only fear; in some places they removed their superiors, basing their action on the right of the communities to elect their own bishops, as had been granted by the revolution, and which, in principle, was entirely canonical. In some places the bishops were even arrested. The Provisional Government, in the person of its Ober-procuror of the Synod, V. N. Lvoff (not to be confused with the head of the Government, Prince G. E. Lvoff), took upon itself the task of "cleansing" the episcopacy and the Holy Synod of Rasputinites and extreme monarchists. It is more than doubtful whether the Provisional Government

had canonical authority for this. The Ober-procuror of the old régime represented in the Church the sacred person of the Tsar. The dependence of the Church upon an entirely non-ecclesiastical, liberal, and republican (becoming more and more socialistic) government was a paradox, offensive to ecclesiastical conceptions, even though perhaps politically unavoidable. These events, the hard hand of the Ober-procuror and the appearance of class antagonism within the clergy, seriously dampened the joy of regained freedom for the Church, which so many Othodox people experienced during the first days of the revolution.

This movement, just mentioned above, contained the seed of the future Church schism.

The revolution penetrated the life of the nation, taking on more and more the appearance of anarchy. It became clear that, for the army, the chief meaning of the overthrow lay in the conclusion of peace, regardless of cost. Peasants seized the land of the landlords, in some places killing the proprietors. Workmen demanded the nationalization of factories. In the cities mobs of deserters in soldiers' uniforms reigned; murders, robberies, crimes of all sort were committed throughout the country practically without punishment. In the midst of the general breakdown, the Communist Party, headed by Lenin, pressed forward for the seizure of authority, promising to the masses peace, land, and bread.

It was in such circumstances that the elections to the All Russian Church "Sobor" (Council) took place. The Russian Church had had no Sobor during the whole period of the Empire, the last Sobor being in

1666. The restoration of the conciliar basis in the Church had long been the watchword of liberals and Slavophiles, and corresponded with the deepest conceptions of the Church. In 1905 the Emperor, making a concession to certain Church circles, recognized the necessity of calling a general Sobor of the Russian Church. The organizing committee worked for many years, but before long it became clear that the object of the bureaucracy was to bury the Sobor, in which it saw dangers of liberalism. As a matter of fact, when the elections to the Sobor took place, in the summer of 1917, the general attitude of *Orthodox* Russia was rather conservative, among the peasants as well as in the broad mass of the "bourgeoisie" and nationally inclined intelligentzia.

The Sobor opened in Moscow on August 15, 1917. The "left" group in the Church, represented by priests and professors of the Theological Academies, found itself greatly in the minority. The balance was on the side of the moderate and right. It would be wrong to assert that the Sobor was controlled by the "right,"[1] headed by the well-known Anthony Khrapovitsky, Archbishop of Kharkoff, formerly of Volhynia. The influence of this bishop, one of the most learned and talented in the Russian Church, was of course great, but the dominating influence unquestionably belonged to the centre, led by a group of devoted laymen, such as Professor S. N. Bulgakoff (now a priest) and Professor E. N. Trubetzkoy (deceased), well-known philosophers and

[1] This is the attitude of Professor B. V. Titlinoff in his book, "The Church during the Revolution," pp. 68 and 91-92. Petrograd, 1924.

theologians of the new school. As regards both Church and politics, they must be placed among the moderate liberals, near to the Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadet). The bishops in the Sobor, more inclined to the right, found support in the peasants, whose representation gave democratic character to the Sobor. Certainly there was a wide gulf between the conservative, Orthodox peasants and those who at that time were burning the estate houses of the gentry.

The Sobor sat for a long time, adjourning in the fall of 1918, in the midst of the fighting of the Civil War, with its work unfinished. However, it delineated and in part effected a broad programme of reform in Church administration which reflects a spirit of moderate liberalism. The principal results were the democratizing of the parish administrations, the drawing of laymen into active participation in Church life, such as in the selection of their pastors, and the establishment of the conciliar basis in the higher Church administration. Many of these ecclesiastical reforms failed of realization because of the beginning of Communist persecution of the Church.

But the principal achievement of the Sobor was unquestionably the restoration of the Patriarchate. The Patriarchate in Russia, it will be remembered, was abandoned by Peter the Great, and replaced by the Holy Synod, consisting of bishops appointed by the Tsar. Before the revolution the idea of the restoration of the Patriarchate was supported in episcopal circles by those who longed for Church independence. This movement was stimulated largely by Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitzky, and was not

popular among the liberals. The defenders of "sobornostj" (conciliarity) feared that in the person of the Patriarch there would be a despotic head for the Church. But in the fall of 1917 the situation was such that the idea of a Patriarch united practically the whole of Orthodox Russia. In the Government there was little authority, and the Church without question faced a bitter cup of adversity. In a year of general turmoil it was necessary to put the care of the Church in strong hands, to find leaders around whom it would be possible to unite persecuted Orthodoxy.

The October (November) Revolution obliged the Sobor to hasten the election of the Patriarch. The solemn ceremony of election took place to the thunder of cannon, for the Bolsheviks were bombarding the Kremlin, which was defended by a band of junkers remaining loyal to the Provisional Government. Three candidates were chosen by ballot, and of these one was to be elected by lot. The Sobor left the final selection to the will of God, and a revered staretz—a monk honoured by the whole of Moscow—drew from the urn the name of Tikhon (Belavin), the Metropolitan of Moscow. Anthony, who was the favourite candidate for the Patriarchate, and who even received a majority of votes in the ballot, was disappointed in his expectations.

The one on whom the lot fell had in no way been distinguished among the bishops, either by learning or by oratory, by asceticism or by political influence. Modest and unassuming, he conquered everyone who knew him by his goodness and amiability. Several years of service in America had broadened his ad-

ministrative experience, but he remained above all a humble and simple pastor of the humility-loving Russian Church. It would have been difficult for the Church to find a better representative of her real spiritual character. Doubtless this accounts for the extraordinary love of the people for the Patriarch.

Having elected the Patriarch, the Sobor did not leave him complete authority over the Russian Church. He was obliged to administer it in collaboration with a Synod and a Higher Church Council. Furthermore, every two years a National Sobor was to be called, which might even impeach the Patriarch. Finally, before adjourning, the Sobor even laid down the main lines of relationships to the new Bolshevik Government. At that time these relationships could not but be exceedingly tense. The new revolutionary power, as distinguished from the Provisional Government, from the very beginning maintained an inimical attitude towards the Church. Anticipating the general constitutional provision regarding the separation of Church and State, a series of decrees was issued, beginning in December, 1917, destroying the economic basis of Church existence: the decree of December 4 confiscating all Church landed properties (along with all private domains), of December 11 withdrawing all schools from the Church (including the theological professional schools), of December 18 instituting civil marriage and turning over the registry books to the Government. In January, 1918, all Government subsidies for the support of the Church and its institutions were discontinued.

However, the principal factor lay not in these decrees, but rather in the general atheistic ideology

of the new Government and in the violent character of its dictatorship. The Provisional Government had just been overthrown by the soldiers and sailors of the Petrograd garrison. In the beginning of January the Constituent Assembly, chosen in general elections, was dispersed. The power for the whole country was seized by the Soviets of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies—actually bands of deserters and of workmen "Red guards." The central power, the Soviet of People's Commissars, possessed no administrative apparatus, and had no authority in the provinces. The officials and intelligentzia boycotted it, whereas the workers and soldiers put into immediate effect the dictatorship of the proletariat, working up class hatred towards the intelligentzia, which was called "bourgeois." No one seriously believed in the permanence of the new power, which held out to the people what appeared to be the most Utopian watchwords: socialism and separate peace. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that the October Revolution was considered by practically the whole of the intelligentzia as the downfall of Russia, as the last convulsive act of the revolution before German occupation. And it was natural that the Moscow Sobor should also be touched by this political attitude. On November 11 it addressed to the people a proclamation calling for repentance and a return to the way of Christ. Referring to the bombarding of the Kremlin as a "blasphemous crime against the Orthodox faith as well as against the Orthodox people and its history," the proclamation pointed to the "responsibility of the seducers and leaders who were poisoning the heart of the people by teachings deny-

ing faith in God, planting envy, greed, and rapaciousness." "The Russian nation is being destroyed by this demoniacal godlessness."

On November 17, having reference to the Bolshevik proposal of peace to Germany, the Sobor accepted another proclamation in which it is stated, "that the persons speaking in the name of the Russian nation in international affairs are not the freely elected representatives of the population, nor do they represent the mind and will of the nation, wherefore they cannot be considered authorized to conduct peace negotiations." The participation of the Church in politics was entirely unavoidable at that moment. One can say without question that this proclamation of the Sobor represented exactly the conviction of the entire Russian nation, if one means by nation the wide range of the educated classes, without regard to political parties. It is true that, in the proclamation which has been quoted, the Sobor spoke in the name of "one hundred million Orthodox people," and this was a mistake. But in November, 1917, in Moscow no one could suspect how deeply the watchwords of the Bolsheviks had penetrated, thanks to the demobilizing army, into the very depths of the hundred million Orthodox peasants.

And it was not a personal act, nor did the Patriarch Tikhon take upon himself the rôle of leader of counter-revolution when, entirely in the spirit of this proclamation of the Sobor, he placed an anathema on the Bolsheviks for "persecuting the Truth of Christ, for daily and in beastly manner destroying entirely innocent people." Recounting the numerous acts of violence against the Church, the Patriarch called the

faithful "to rise up in defence of the insulted and oppressed Church, even to suffer for the cause of Christ if necessary."

This famous proclamation of the Patriarch is dated January 19, 1919. In order correctly to assess its meaning, it is necessary to take into consideration the fact that in it the "Bolsheviks" are not definitely mentioned, that excommunication from the Church was passed not upon definite individuals or groups of individuals, but upon "the outcast of mankind." Yet it was not difficult to surmise whom the Patriarch had in mind. He openly spoke of the power which "displayed unrestrained self-will and continuous violence against everyone." This indefinite excommunication could not have strict canonical effect. On no occasion did any priest refuse the sacraments of the services to Communists who turned to the Church (and there were such, especially among the soldiers). The "anathema" of the Patriarch was in fact only the energetic expression of religious and moral condemnation. And in this judgment the entire Russian Church stood behind the Patriarch.

In 1918, however, the Church no longer represented the whole Russian people. Against the background of the terrible events taking place in the Civil War, the activities of the Sobor remained comparatively unnoticed by the broad masses of the people. Several times suspending its work and having by no means finished it, the Sobor adjourned in the fall of 1918, placing upon the Patriarch Tikhon the heavy burden of authority in the Church, at the moment of the very sharpest revolutionary crisis.

CHAPTER II

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

The decree regarding the separation of Church and State was published on January 23, 1918. It consisted of thirteen articles, the major part of which only defined the status necessarily consequent upon the new secularized form of government. In principle it proclaimed freedom of conscience and freedom of faith. Article 2 stated: "Within the confines of the Republic it is forbidden to pass any local laws, or issue decrees, which may hinder or limit the freedom of conscience." Article 3 stated: "Every citizen may confess any religion or may confess no religion; every loss of legal rights connected with the confessing of any faith or confessing of no faith is abolished." Article 5 stated: "The free practice of religious ceremonies is guaranteed in so far as it does not interfere with social order."

Nevertheless, the decree did not consistently sustain this liberal attitude. Four of its articles encroached upon essential rights of the Church, binding its activities hand and foot. Article 13 proclaimed all property of the churches and of church societies to be the possession of the people. Article 11 forbade "obligatory collections and assessments on behalf of church societies." And Article 12 reads: "No church or religious societies have the right to possess

property. They do not have the right of juridical persons."

In accordance with the wording of the last article, all economic activities of the parishes were in fact rendered impossible. They could not have a regular budget, could not prepare estimates (*e.g.*, for repair of buildings), did not have even the right of assessing themselves. Article 13 appropriated from the churches even church buildings and church vessels, although the nationalization procedure was circumscribed by the following limitation: "Buildings and objects used specifically for purposes of worship shall be assigned by special decree of the local or central authorities for free use by the respective religious societies." The indefinite wording of this article threatened even the conducting of Church services, and made men fear the worst: What if the organs of Government should refuse to issue the necessary decrees of assignment?

And, finally, the greatest anxiety was created by Article 9, which encroached even on the spiritual activity of the Church. "The school is separated from the Church. Religious instruction is forbidden in all government and public schools, as well as in private schools where general educational subjects are taught. Citizens may teach and be taught religion privately."

This article forbade even private, voluntary religious instruction in the school, which parents' committees everywhere insisted upon. On the very day of the publishing of the decree, January 23, the Central Committee of the All-Russian Union of Parents' Organizations proclaimed the prohibition of

religious teaching to be " contrary to the principle of the autonomy of the Russian school and a negation of the true freedom of conscience."

The decree regarding the separation of Church and State necessitated the issuing of explanatory interpretations, which appeared only several months later, August 24, 1918, and January 3, 1919. These interpretations were far from favourable to the Church. Religious societies were permitted to finance themselves only by voluntary collections. The changing of church buildings into civil institutions was provided for in two cases: (1) " if there should not be found those desirous of accepting the Church property " (*i.e.*, if a parish should not be organized), and (2) " if as a result of need for such premises for generally useful purposes, the local Sovdep, responding to the demand of the working masses (preferably in plenary session) should pass the necessary resolution." And, finally, the Government forbade religious instruction to children and youths under eighteen years of age, except private instruction in groups not exceeding three persons. In this manner all attempts at teaching religion in the churches were checked, and youth was given over to the mercy of the Government's atheistic propaganda.

In January, 1918, however, the faithful found all other troubles secondary in face of anxiety for the fate of the churches and of religious services. Did not the decree regarding the separation of Church and State actually imply the closing of the churches? A few days before its publication, an order was issued for the requisition of the Alexander-Nevsky Lavra, in Petrograd, the principal monastery of the capital,

the residence of the Metropolitan and seat of the Theological Academy. The premises of the Lavra were to be turned over to the Commissariat of Social Welfare. Armed parties which twice endeavoured to take over the Lavra were met with decisive rebuffs on the part of the Church authorities, and on January 19 a great crowd, which gathered at the sounding of the alarm bell, refused to admit the soldiers. On January 21 there was a great sacred procession in Petrograd, which registered the protest of the Orthodox population against the seizure of its sacred things. The Government submitted. There followed an explanation that it had been intended not to close the monastery but to house invalids in it. However, the struggle had begun throughout the whole of Russia. In the proclamation of January 19, already referred to, the Patriarch Tikhon mentioned, in addition to Alexander-Nevsky, the seizure of the Pochaevskaja Lavra, one of the greatest monasteries of the Ukraine (in Volhynia), and the desecration of the deeply venerated chapel of the Saviour in Petrograd. A few days after the publication of the decree, the Sobor entered on its minutes: (1) "That in the guise of law providing freedom of conscience, there was a malicious attack against the entire structure and the life of the Orthodox Church, and an act of open persecution against it"; and (2) "that any participation either in the publication of this legislation hostile to the Church, or attempts to effect it, is incompatible with membership in the Orthodox Church, and brings upon the guilty persons of Orthodox faith the most severe punishment of the Church, even to the extent of excommunication." Simultaneously with this resolution

the Sobor addressed a proclamation to the "Orthodox people": "Unite all of you, men and women, old and young for the defence of our inherited Sacred Things . . . for the people's rulers seek to despoil the people of this heritage of God. . . . It is better to shed one's blood and to become worthy of a martyr's crown than to surrender the Orthodox faith to the enemy for his abuse."[1]

The proclamation of the Sobor met with a lively response among the people. Everywhere laymen united for the defence of the churches. In Petrograd, after the "Brotherhood for the Defence of the Alexander-Nevsky Lavra," whose members vowed to defend the Lavra "even to death," had been formed, unions were organized in each parish, numbering up to 60,000 members. In Moscow similar unions were united in a general council. The person of the Patriarch was surrounded by a guard which was maintained by twenty-four persons in turn. The movement found response even in the provinces. Everywhere there took place sacred processions, night vigils, and meetings of protest. The crowds were unarmed, but in some places, during attempts at confiscation of the churches, they mauled the commissars. In a number of places the Red troops fired, and there were many killed and wounded—*e.g.*, in Tula, Kharkov, and other places. Finally, the opposition was crushed. The Communist power made the decree regarding the separation of Church and State completely effective within the limits which it considered necessary.

[1] *Tserkovnia Viedomosti,* No. 3-4, 1918. Quoted by Titlinoff, *op. cit.*

In what actual forms did this separation find expression? The most radical was the inauguration of the secularization of the school. The teaching of religion to children was forbidden not only in the school but in the churches. The clergy were left practically without income, and nearly everywhere evicted from the parish houses, which had now been nationalized. Only in the villages the clergy retained their homes and land, this latter greatly diminished. All the commercial enterprises belonging to the Church, such as candle-factories and printing-shops, were confiscated. Only the church buildings were left, and these, after an inventory, were turned over to the organized parishes, along with responsibility for maintaining them as well as for guarding all the valuable ecclesiastical objects which they contained. If the parish, by reason of poverty or because of fewness of people, was unable to maintain the church, it was turned over to the local Soviet, which, as we have seen, in any case had the right to appropriate the building for any purpose it might decide upon. How widely did the Soviets make use of this privilege? In the first place, throughout the whole Republic and without exception, private churches were closed—in schools, barracks, government institutions, etc., altogether a very considerable number. These were converted into dancing-halls, clubs, or theatres. Where institutions were occupied by Red soldiers, desecrations were frequent. Ikons and sacred objects were often destroyed or covered with blasphemous scribblings. A great number of facts in this connection, as related to the south of Russia, and based upon material gathered by a Commission under General Denikin,

is contained in the "Black Book," edited by A. A. Valentinoff.[1]

Cases of seizure and profanation of parish churches, especially in the villages, were rather infrequent. In this regard the wave of religious fervour of January, 1918, did not pass without effect. The authorities abandoned their encroachments on church services, considering them an ineradicable spiritual requirement of the masses, and only in exceptional circumstances infringed upon them. The closing of churches was most frequent in the workers' sections, where Marxist propaganda made deep inroads, but in the villages generally only where the proximity of a number of churches rendered it difficult for the impoverished population to support them. Nevertheless, even in the villages we know of cases of wrecking and even of the burning of churches.[2] In the cities a great number of shrines were closed and demolished; in Moscow itself a number of churches were torn down, one of them, incidentally, in order to clear the ground in front of the statue of Vorovsky. In the spring of 1923, information came from widely separated localities regarding the public burning of ikons,[3] a result of the campaign openly sponsored by the Bolshevik *Pravda*.[4]

Most pitiful of all was the fate of the monasteries.

[1] Published in Paris, 1925. Also an English edition, 1924, bearing the title "The Assault of Heaven," and a German edition.

[2] *Izvestia Vzik* (Official organ of the Soviet Government). Moscow, No. 78 (1815), 1923.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Pravda* [Official organ of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party]. Moscow, No. 117, May 30, 1923.

Their secularization began, as we have seen, even before the publishing of the decree. In the decree itself and in the instructions related to it we find nothing regarding the monasteries. In response to inquiries from the provinces, the Fifth Section of the Commissariat of Justice explained that "the fate of the monasteries rests upon the judgment of the local Soviets, depending upon the purpose to which they consider it desirable to assign them, such as to sanatoriums, farms, schools, asylums for invalid soldiers, or for transformation into some sort of useful husbandry." As a result, practically all of the monasteries in Russia were liquidated, and the monks scattered. Regarding the success of the secularization, the official organ supplies the following figures: up to the fall of 1920, 637 monasteries had been liquidated; by 1922, 49 more had been added. However, in the interests of accuracy it should be noted that by no means in all cases did complete liquidation take place. In many monasteries some of the old monks were left to live out their days, in the capacity of watchmen or workers attached to the new institutions. In places where historical monasteries were made over into museums (such as the renowned Troitzky-Sergievskaja Lavra), a number of monks remained as caretakers. Finally, in some places small domestic dwellings were retained under the form of legalized agricultural communes. In Moscow itself one can still find several monasteries with regular ascetic life. There have even been retained several all-Russian centres of pilgrimage (at the relics of renowned saints), which are exploited by the local Soviets. It was only in April, 1927, that the authorities closed the Sarov monastery, made famous

by Saint Seraphim. The revenue from pilgrims stopping at the monastery hostels has saved these sacred places from the general fate of being closed and destroyed.

In general, the Soviet power has allowed the preservation of religious services and the religious organization of the faithful, although it has displayed an evident tendency towards limiting them as much as possible. But what about the decreed "freedom of conscience"? If by the term freedom of conscience is understood not only the freedom of religious ceremony but also the freedom to confess religion, the freedom to preach and evangelize, then one cannot speak of freedom under the régime of the Communist dictatorship. Local Soviets not infrequently prohibited even preaching in the churches, or demanded the previous presentation of the sermon for censorship. Tolerating the sermon in the churches, the authorities practically have forbidden religious addresses in public meetings outside the church, especially by laymen. Every public expression of religious conviction in Communist Russia has been accompanied by risk—discharge from employment, arrest, exile, and, in the first years, even execution. During the expulsion of professors from the universities, which took on a mass character in 1922 and 1923, their attitude towards religion was the main factor. In 1921 the rector of Saratoff University (the physicist Zernoff) was arrested and discharged simply because he had appeared in the local cathedral to give addresses on religious-philosophical subjects. To speak in defence of Christianity in Soviet Russia is just as dangerous as to speak against socialism or

the dictatorship of the party. We shall see later that the Communist party combines in its ideology struggle against capitalism and struggle against God.

By a certain inconsistency, the authorities tolerate the existence of a few theological schools, or, rather, courses for the preparation of priests. Up to 1923 the Theological Institute in Petrograd, the successor of the closed Theological Academy, continued to work. The terror of 1923, however, caused it to close its doors. Subsequently modest pastoral courses were opened. The schismatic "Renovated" Church has three higher schools, in Moscow, Petrograd, and Kiev. If one leaves aside the Renovated Church, the most likely explanation for the existence of the Petrograd Courses (incidentally, with very few students and limited in its activities) is the desire of the authorities to control the attitude of the church intelligentzia.

There is little need to say that printed defence of the faith is impossible. Not in principle but in practice the censor forbids the issuing of any books of religious content. Exceptions, and those very rare, are made for the sectarians and Renovated Church. In spite of numerous applications, the Church has not yet been permitted even to print Gospels, prayer-books, or indispensable liturgical books. Printing in the Church Slavonic language is altogether prohibited. Furthermore, the authorities have taken every possible measure for the destruction of the old religious literature. In the nationalized bookshops and stock-rooms of publishing houses great quantities of such literature were seized and sent to the paper factories or sold by weight in various localities for use as wrapping paper by market tradesmen. In the course of this

operation a large number of scientifically valuable works were lost, such as the editions of the "Palestine Society" and of the theological academies. In all the public libraries, except for the universities and the Central Government library, books on religion were confiscated, together with a great quantity of philosophical, historical, sociological, and even artistic literature.

Typical of the minutiæ observed in the persecution of religion was the obligation imposed by the censor to print the word "God" and other sacred names in small letters. This cavil would seem to be a minor thing, but it proved very important for those with sensitive religious conscience. In the régime of persecution of the Church, many authors considered that for them to submit to this obligation would be an act of formal apostasy. We know of a case when the purely scientific, historical-artistic researches concerning the newly restored ikon of the Vladimirsky Virgin (one of the most remarkable productions of Byzantine painting) could not be issued because this condition was unacceptable to the author. But the easily understood sensitiveness of authors was many times magnified in the touchiness of the censor. The censor forbade not only purely theological or evidently Christian works, but even books on the history of the Church and on the science of religion in general, except for purely propagandizing atheistic literature. However, this will not seem remarkable to those who know that this sort of administrative persecution (even exile) was directed not only against religion but against every sort of philosophical or historical idealism. The exile of Russian philosophers to foreign countries is clear

evidence of this. It may be noted further that the struggle against idealism, in the mind of the convinced Communist, draws from the same source as his struggle against religion: idealism is potentially religious, very refined, but a no less dangerous form of mystical contagion.

CHAPTER III

THE PERSECUTION OF RELIGION

Analysis of the decree concerning the separation of Church and State, and the circumstances of its realization, provides a great deal of material with which to answer the general question: Does Communism conduct open persecution against the Church and religion in general? However, this material is not sufficiently explicit. The Commissariat of Justice, which has concentrated in its Fifth Department all affairs related to the separation of Church and State, is essentially the bearer and guardian of revolutionary legality—an idea which was new and exceptional, and by no means generally obligatory in the system of Soviet administration, especially in the first years of the dictatorship. In its instructions to local authorities the Commissariat frequently restrained the fanatical destroyers of churches, reminding them of the proclamation providing freedom of conscience. It is characteristic, however, that this same Commissariat in the beginning conducted atheistic propaganda. It is clear that there cannot be talk of the neutrality of the Government in matters of faith. There may only be question as to the means to be employed in the struggle with religion. In fulfilling its task the Commissariat of Justice followed a careful course, falling back upon the Government's monopoly of culture.

But there were other organs which conducted the struggle more openly, even glaringly. At the very time when the circulars regarding the freedom of conscience were being distributed, the Tchéka throughout the whole of Russia were shooting priests and bishops. The archives of this terrible institution are inaccessible; its affairs were conducted so summarily, with such a minimum of paper procedure, that it is questionable whether at any time it will be possible to establish the exact number of victims of the terror, or to discover motives of accusation.[1] According to the approximate conclusion of General Denikin's Commission, published in *The Times* in March, 1922, 28 bishops and 1,215 priests were shot during the years 1918-1919.[2] According to official data of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, 20 bishops and 1,414 priests had been executed up to 1922. When the "Renovated" Bishop, Nikolaj Kashinsky (Solovejtchik), came from Russia (1926) he gave the following figures:

White clergy (priests)	2,691
Monks	1,962
Nuns and other ordained ranks	3,447
	8,100

None of these figures pretend to accuracy.

However, the undisputed fact that mass executions of the clergy took place does not exhaust the evidence of persecution against the Church. These terrible figures do not constitute the largest sums in the

[1] *Cf.* Melgunoff, "The Red Terror in Russia." Berlin, 1924.

[2] Taken from P. N. Miliukoff, "Russia in Transformation," I., p. 194. Paris, 1927.

bloody totals. According to approximate data of the Denikin Commission for the same period, there were 6,775 professors and teachers, 8,800 doctors, etc., in the general figure of 1,716,118 (!) killed. The bloody machine of the terror was not instituted against the Church alone, and other professions from among the intelligentzia gave even larger numbers of victims.

Another evasion of the charge of persecution is attempted by raising the question of political motives necessitating the terror—*i.e.*, the possibility of political guilt of the clergy.

Knowing the loyalty of the clergy to the Tsarist régime, it was easy to reach the conviction that ministers of the Church had to play an outstanding part in the "White" counter-revolutionary movement. However, this supposition is entirely erroneous. In actual fact, in the territory of the White governments, the clergy, especially the bishops, blessed and inspired the troops, but these representatives of the Church, who took a definite side in the Civil War, for the most part evacuated Russia along with the defeated White troops in 1920.

What we see in the interior of Red Russia is something quite different. Here, after the first wrathful gestures of the Sobor and the Patriarch in the beginning of 1918, a change set in, not, however, in the attitude towards the anti-religious revolution, but in establishing practical relationships with it. As early as March, 1919, the representatives of the Sobor conducted negotiations with the authorities to secure possible favourable interpretation of the decree for the Church. The popular movement in defence of

the Church was not so powerful as the leaders of the Church had hoped. Soon they understood that they could not speak in the name of one hundred million Orthodox, that the former Orthodox peasant Russia in its broad masses had been won over by the Communist Revolution. The leaders of the Church soon understood the hopelessness of open struggle and the danger of bringing the Church under heavy fire, possibly endangering even the holding of services of worship. According to Orthodox conceptions, the cult so completely embraces the public service of the Church, that for its preservation the leaders were ready to make great sacrifices. We shall see when we speak of the internal life of the Church, that this line of conduct was dictated by purely religious, mystico-ascetic conceptions—conceptions inherent to Orthodoxy renewed by the regenerated Church.

We have one very valuable impression of the political attitude of the Patriarch in the summer of 1918, belonging to a witness who unquestionably commands confidence, Prince G. N. Trubetzkoy, the former Russian minister in Serbia. Five years after this date, at the time of the trial of the Patriarch, he made the following statement to the Vienna representative of the telegraph agency Russpress: "As a worker in the White Movement, I visited the Patriarch Tikhon and asked him to send his blessing to the White armies, secretly if necessary. I was expected to convey his blessing to the Don, and I guaranteed that this secret would not be disclosed. I endeavoured to persuade the Patriarch to do this, for the reason that his blessing would greatly raise the morale of the troops. But the Patriarch was unmov-

able, and even in this decisive moment did not alter his conviction that the clergy must stand outside politics and political struggle." In a letter to the editor of the Russian newspaper *Rul*, published in Berlin, July 17, 1923, the Prince inserted into this interview the following correction, still further emphasizing the non-political attitude of the Patriarch: "I did not ask the permission of the Patriarch to give his blessing to the troops of the Volunteer Army. . . . I requested the permission of His Holiness to give in his name a blessing personally to one of the outstanding leaders of the White Movement, under condition of maintaining absolute secrecy. However, the Patriarch did not find even this possible, so strongly did he hold himself aloof from any sort of politics."[1]

On the first anniversary of the October Revolution (October 21, 1918), the Patriarch addressed a long communication to the Soviet of People's Commissars. Recounting all the misdeeds of the Bolsheviks against the people and the Church, the Patriarch concluded with the remarkable words: "It is not for us to judge earthly powers; all authority from God would draw unto itself our blessing if it were in truth the 'servant of God,' for 'rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil' (Rom. xiii. 3). However, to you who use your power for the persecution and the destruction of the innocent, we issue our word of admonition: celebrate the anniversary of your coming to power by the release of the imprisoned, the cessation of blood letting, of violence, of ruination, of restraint of faith; turn not to destruction but to the construction of order and law; give to the people the respite from

[1] *Rul* (Berlin Russian daily), No. 798. July 17, 1923.

civil warfare which they have longed for and deserved. For otherwise the blood will be on your own head. 'For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (Matt. xxvi. 52)."

Despite the vigour and sharpness of this remonstrance, it is easy to see in it the patriarch's recognition of the Bolsheviks as *de jure* in authority. In the fifteenth century the Metropolitan Philip of Moscow similarly admonished Ivan the Terrible, yet without calling for revolt against him as Tsar. It was the admonition of a pastor, not the proclamation of a political enemy.

A year later, in 1919, in an encyclical dated September 25, the Patriarch imposed on the priesthood responsibility for keeping aloof from the Civil War. "I remember how we," continued Prince Trubetzkoy, "standing at that time close to the Volunteer Army in Southern Russia, were distressed over the epistle of the Patriarch; but, subsequently, I could not help but admire his wise restraint. Wherever bishops and priests conducted prayers for the victorious advance of the Volunteer Army, the clergy shared the fate of this army and were obliged hastily to abandon their parishes, to the great detriment of the Church."

This brings us back to the question of the counter-revolutionary crimes of the clergy. So far as records are available, they show that in practically every instance where punishment was imposed for political offence, it was on account of conducting prayers for the White Guards.[1] But was it possible for a simple priest to refuse the passing troops their natural de-

[1] *Cf.* "The Assault of Heaven."

mand to dedicate their advance with prayers? Not all the priests after this "crime" abandoned their parishes for safety with the retreating White Army. Many remained for torture and death. As for the Reds, no prayers were requested; they got along without the blessing of the Lord.

In the majority of cases the priests were arrested and shot without guilt of any sort. They succumbed along with the "hostage" bourgeoisie, along with the landowners, merchants, barristers, and other representatives of the liberal professions and political parties. The terror which the Communist Party conducted had not a personal, but class character, in accordance with the spirit of Marxist philosophy. "We are exterminating the bourgeoisie as a class," writes Latzis, one of the leading workers in the Tchéka, in the "Weekly Gazette" of the Extraordinary Commission. "In drawing up evidence, do not look for incriminating material to prove that the person under prosecution acted by deed or word against the Soviet power. The first question which you must ask him is, what is his ancestry, education, or profession. These questions must determine the fate of the accused. Therein lies the meaning and the essence of the Red terror."[1]

The priests perished as representatives of the "bourgeoisie," a category corresponding to the "aristocracy" of the French Revolution. Is there evidence which would allow us to say that the keen edge of the Red terror was directed against them with especial hatred? I believe that one may answer this question affirmatively. The evidence regarding Voro-

[1] Quoted from Miliukoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.

bieff, President of the Tchéka in Perm, may be applied not to him alone. His secretary gave evidence in a deposition to the French Lieutenant, Adrian Souberbiel (February 10, 1919): "Toward the clergy, Vorobieff's attitude was that of hatred, and he called them 'black magpies.' I can confirm that he shot many priests and monks."[1]

The chronicle of the Red terror allows us to generalize this attitude. From among a great number of instances we give the following: "In Poltava Government the Red Army seized the Spasso-Preobrajensky Monastery, occupied and began to rob and desecrate it. After a short time their officer ordered the Superior, the Abbot Ambrosius, to gather all the monks together. Part of them were absent, so there gathered altogether twenty-five persons. It was announced that they were under arrest, and they were ordered to turn over the keys to the monks' cells and to all the other quarters of the monastery. Then the monks were ordered to fetch firewood, with the explanation that they were all to be burned. However, the approach of the Volunteer Army broke up this plan. It was impossible to delay, so they hurriedly drove all the arrested monks out of the city and thence to the railway station. Here, in the darkness of the night, they began to shoot them in groups. The shooting began with the Superior Ambrosius, who was killed by the Communist officer Bakai with his revolver. Afterwards the Red soldiers began to shoot the rest. Seventeen monks were killed, the remaining seven, being only wounded, saved their lives by simulating death" (August 6, 1919).

[1] Quoted from "The Assault of Heaven."

There is evidence of special hatred toward the Church in those tortures and "qualified" executions which in some places were inflicted on the clergy. We have information regarding the most beastly cruelty, which we are not yet in a position to confirm. Nevertheless, the bodies of the executed which were exhumed and photographed by the Whites confirm the most awful rumours and testimonies. We are told of a case of impaling in Poltava, as in Kherson of a priest who was hung on a cross, etc. An English diplomatic agent reported to his Government that Andronik, Bishop of Perm, was buried alive.[1] There is no need to say more. This hatred toward the clergy on the part of the Tchéka officials completely harmonizes with confirmed instances of the most cynical sacrilege in the churches, especially those occupied by the Red Army during the Russian Civil War.

However, the question of persecution of the Church is less to be decided by various, although numerous, cases of violence, than by the avowed character of the entire system, by the spirit of Bolshevism. Russian Communism makes the struggle with religion one of its chief objectives. In the "Programme of the Communists," Bukharin says: "Faith in God is a reflection of the most abominable of earthly relationships—faith in slavery." Every member of the Party is required to conduct anti-religious propaganda. For observing Church ceremonies (marriage, baptizing of children) he may be excluded from the Party. The same objective stands before the Comsomol (the Communist Youth Association). (Paragraph 5 of the Section concerning Political-Educational Work of the

[1] Melgunoff, *op. cit.*

Russian Comsomol.) The programme accepted at the Third Congress, October 2, 1920, reads as follows: "Rearing its members to be convinced Communists, the Russian Comsomol conducts an ideological struggle with the religious plague which is consuming the young generation of workers and aids the representatives of the bourgeoisie to deceive the people."[1] The reference here is not to the Church as connected with the old régime and not to one or another religious organization, but to the very principle of religious faith, which is so hateful to Communism.

"We must act so that every blow to the traditional structure of the church, to the clergy, etc., will be turned into a blow against religion in general." "Even to the blind it is clear to what extent a decisive struggle is necessary against the priests, whether they call themselves pastors, abbots, rabbis, patriarchs, mullahs, or the pope; and similarly it is inevitable that at a certain stage this struggle must be carried on as a struggle against God, whether He is called Jehovah, Jesus, Buddha, or Allah." Thus writes one of the inaugurators of the anti-religious struggle, the old Marxist, L. Stepanoff.[2] To be sure, this attitude toward religion is no novelty in Marxism. The renowned phrase, "Religion is opium for the people," which is written large on the wall of the City Hall opposite the shrine of the Iversky Virgin, is a quotation from Marx. But in none of the European socialist parties or groupings has the struggle against religion

[1] N. Bukharin, "Programma Kommunistoff," p. 51.

[2] "Purposes and Methods of Anti-Religious Propaganda," pp. 18-37. Moscow, 1923.

been put to the fore as in Russian Communism. Out of atheism they have made a new creed, preached with real religious fanaticism. Communism has cast out of its programme the classical watchword of social democracy—"Religion is a private matter." For Communism, religion is a social enemy against which struggle is obligatory. Many Russian church people believe that its anti-Christian motive constitutes the jugular vein of Bolshevism. Perhaps this is an exaggeration: neither Lenin nor Trotzky was able personally to devote time to anti-religious propaganda. The Civil War, the internal social struggle (terror), and the economic problem occupied the entire attention of these chief leaders. However, this propaganda attracted to its service not a few of the strong Communist leaders, ideologists, and theoreticians, who proved unsuited for essentially practical or economic work. We name Lunacharsky, Jaroslavsky (secretary of the Central Control Commission of the Party), and the above-mentioned Stepanoff. Bukharin also devotes no little attention to this matter. As regards the form of the struggle and the organization of propaganda, it is necessary to make a distinction between two periods—the period of the Civil War and the years following the Civil War. The dividing line comes in 1922.

During the Civil War the Bolsheviks had little time for the Church. While by no means hiding their attitude towards it, and working off their hatred by persecuting individual priests, organizing lectures (Spitzberg, Lunacharsky), etc., they did not undertake the struggle on a broad programme. Leaving the Patriarch in freedom, they even seemed to forgive

him the anathema which he proclaimed in 1918. The struggle with the Church was concentrated, as we have seen, in the Commissariat of Justice, whence local Soviets were instructed, anti-religious agitators were sent out and literature distributed. In 1919 special success accompanied the "exhibit method" of struggle with Orthodoxy—the exposure of relics. The blow seemed to be extremely well aimed. For the masses, the cult of the saints occupied nearly the central place in religion. The Russian people believed in the miraculous preservation of the relics of the saints; their splendid shrines constituted centres of worship, attracting thousands of pilgrims. No one knew exactly what lay beneath the brocaded coverings in these gilded coffins. The simple people and even a large part of the clergy were convinced that the bodies of the saints were preserved as in life. Were they pious legends or pious frauds? Learned theologians and bishops who conducted investigations in regard to the relics, of course, knew their secrets. In reality there was no secret, for much had been written about the matter. But there are few who read works of science or research. The legend was maintained up to the very revolution, and the Bolsheviks decided to blast it and so to strike a blow at the very heart of the people's faith.

At the end of 1918 there began a move of exposing relics, carried out under especially imposing circumstances, for the sake of publicity. Photographs, even cinema films, were taken of the certain occasions, where exposure was made by priests and monks forcibly set to the task. In the majority of the coffins there were found simply bones or dummies of padding

stuffed in canvas to resemble a human body. It seemed that the religious deception was unmasked in plain sight. But the Bolsheviks were mistaken in their reckonings. Everywhere the desecration of coffins brought forth an explosion of religious feeling. There was no open opposition, but legends of new miracles were born and spread throughout Russia. They told of Commissars destroyed by heavenly anger, of disturbed saints appearing to haunt the ungodly, of real relics being miraculously hid, so as not to be given up to the enemy, and in place of themselves leaving only the few bones which the investigators discovered. Above all, in some places the relics were found actually to be in the condition of mummified bodies. Such bodies were transferred to Moscow to the Museum of Hygiene (!), apparently for the purpose of rooting out the superstition; but even here they were made objects of reverence on the part of Orthodox visitors.

The exposure of relics was the sharpest form of anti-religious propaganda during the first period of the revolution. So long as military Communism was conducting the struggle at the front in the Civil War, cultural life in Russia remained comparatively free, however strange this may seem at first glance. This refers to the Church, to the universities, to the Press, etc. It is true that there was no political Press except that of the Government, but religious, philosophical, and scientific publications were not suppressed by the military censorship, which was the only one that existed during these years. "N.E.P."[1] put an end to this, however. Partly emancipating the peasantry and

[1] "New Economic Policy."

small industry from the yoke of Communism, the "N.E.P." marked the beginning of the endeavour to crush out religious freedom in Russia. Beginning approximately with 1922, the Bolsheviks threw all the ideological forces at their disposal into the devastating of bourgeois culture. The exiling from Russia of a number of Russian philosophers and writers was a sign of this change. Simultaneously there went on the proletarization—*i.e.*, the tearing down of the universities, the penetration of the Comsomol into the schools, the establishment of the "Glavlit" and provincial "lits," a censoring apparatus which precluded in Russia any philosophical or social literature except that of Marxist character. Now the struggle with the Church became the focus of internal policies. The propaganda of godlessness assumed hitherto unheard-of proportions. On March 31, 1922, in the Moscow *Pravda* we read: "The inauguration of anti-religious work among youth was approved by a special council of our party anti-religionists. The All-Russian Council of Political Education (Politprosviet) heartily welcomes this initiative." This programme was carried out unswervingly.

In the schools they demanded that the teachers actively participate in the propagation of godlessness. On the great holidays, such as Easter and Christmas, special lectures were given to explain to the children the superstitious and pagan sources of Christian ceremonies and beliefs. Tiny children being brought up in Government "children's homes" were instilled with atheism as the official symbol of faith. Here is an example of a picture from life printed in the *Pravda*, June 4, 1923 (No. 242), regarding an incredible

voting which took place in the children's home in Krementchug.

> "Who believes that there is a God, raise his hand."
> Up come three, four, seven . . . two are dropped.
> "Who is against God?"
> Up comes a forest of hands.
> A cheerful cry: "Hurrah, God hast lost."

The preaching of godlessness was combined with the propaganda of proletarian morality, which in practice was immorality. Incidentally, while the question of the school and of children's immorality only slightly pertains to our subject, it is, of course, related to it for the reason that the wearing down of all religious feelings could not but affect the helpless minds of the children. As is well known, children in Soviet Russia practically from infancy must pass through the preparatory work of the Communist Party. The three successive age-group organizations are called: "Octobrists," "Pioneers," and "Comsomol." Religious convictions are still permitted among Octobrists and Pioneers, although the propaganda of atheism is heartily carried forward. But the Comsomol (the upper classes of the middle school, and the higher school, together with the working youth and part of the peasant youth) consists of those who are atheists by conviction, who are obliged by their constitution, as we have seen, to conduct anti-religious propaganda. The Comsomol in Russia numbers not less than one million members.

It was at Christmas, 1922, that the Comsomol first brought its atheist propaganda out on the street, endeavouring, with its sacrilegious carnival, to insult the religious feelings of Christians. In all the chief cities

of Russia, parades were organized as parodies of the Orthodox sacred processions. A Soviet semi-official correspondent picturesquely describes the "Comsomol Christmas" in Moscow in the following manner:[1]

"The God-fearing Moscow population saw a rare spectacle. From the Sadowa to the Place of the Revolution there stretched an unending procession of gods and heathen priests. It was a splendid method for learning about this thousand-year-old fanaticism. Here was a yellow Buddha with short feet and hands giving the blessing, squinting and exhaustingly roguish; and the Babylonian Marduk, the Orthodox Virgin, Chinese bonzes, and Catholic priests, the Roman Pope in his yellow tiara, giving the blessing to new adepts; a Protestant pastor on a high pole; Russian priests in typical stoles, offering for a small price to marry anybody. And here a monk sitting on a black coffin with exposed relics. He is praising his wares for possible purchasers. A student from Sverdloff Communist University splendidly acts a comedy of priestly greediness.

> We need no rabbis!
> We need no priests!
> Down with the bourgeoisie!
> Down with the kulaks!"[2]

Similar mockery took place all over Russia. Here and there the celebration was concluded by burning the "gods," as in Tiflis, where the day was made the occasion for turning over the former military cathedral to the Comsomol. The population, and not only the faithful, looked upon this hideous carnival with dumb

[1] *Izvestia Vzik.* January 10, 1923.

[2] The "tight-fisted," the popular name for well-to-do peasants.

horror. There were no protests from the silent streets —the years of terror had done their work—but nearly everyone tried to turn off the road when it met this shocking procession. I, personally, as a witness of the Moscow carnival, may certify that there was not a drop of popular pleasure in it. The parade moved along empty streets and its attempts at creating laughter or provocation were met with dull silence on the part of the occasional witnesses.

That evening blasphemous dramatic presentations took place in most of the theatres, concerning whose nature one may judge from the title of one of the most widely distributed anti-religious plays, "The Immaculate Conception." Following the "Comsomol Christmas" came the "Easter" of 1923. However, the failure was evident. In fact, this gross insulting of religion brought to life a corresponding reaction in the form of a strengthening of religious feelings, and a protest in the broad masses of the population. Soon the carnivals were abandoned, though blasphemous plays and "educational" lectures were continued. At subsequent great holidays, however, the Comsomol members have not been able to abstain from the satisfaction of passing by the churches singing their characteristic songs, and even creating disturbances in the churches themselves. But the hooligan character of the anti-religious struggle was already meeting condemnation on the part of the leaders. "The struggle with God must be conducted by education, by scientific organization." A whole series of books (Stepanoff, Pokrovsky, and others) is devoted to the methodology of anti-religious propaganda. For this purpose there are established numerous clubs of the

"godless" (bezbojniki). There is a special Government publishing house called "Atheist." There are several bookshops in the capital which deal only in this propagandist literature. The "natural science" point of view on religion is combined with the Marxist view, that religion is only an aspect of class exploitation. Radical historical criticism is drawn upon to provide material for the struggle, especially against Christianity. The book by Drews, "The Christ Myth," and the works of other authors of his school, furnish powerful weapons. In recent years the theory advanced by Drews has become in its way a Communist dogma. In contrast to Kautsky and to the old Marxist conception of Jesus as a social reformer, they demand now from the Communist the assertion: Christ never existed. I know of a case when an experienced propagandist on the anti-religious front, a professor of the Leningrad University, lost his Communist career because his scientific training would not allow him to adjust himself to the new dogma.

But Drews is too heavy an instrument for the masses. For them, and especially for youth, there is published a "comic" magazine "Bezbojnik (Godless)." It is hard to conceive of anything more insipid or wretched than this "humour." The talentless pictures with unending similarity give constantly the same sort of caricatures of Jehovah, Christ, the Virgin, and the titles constantly emphasize that these "Gods" are in the service of the bourgeoisie. A crude pornography runs through this impious literature.

There can be no doubt regarding the purpose of the governing power in Russia. It is endeavouring to

destroy all religion. And in view of this purpose, all the executing and exiling of the clergy, all the restraints put on the activity of the Church, cannot but be looked upon as real persecution. For the executions and the exilings they always find pretences whereby they can continue the fiction of the freedom of faith. But these pretensions deceive no one. Russian Bolshevism has cleverly refused to close all the churches and proclaim all priests to be outlaws, as was done in the French Revolution. Nevertheless, the hatred of the Communists for religion is sharper and more radical than was that of the French Jacobins. They fight not against Christianity only, but against the very idea of religion and even against every kind of idealistic philosophy. Not only the Orthodox and Catholic clergy suffer in Russia: rabbis are arrested, synagogues are closed, the printing of books in ancient Hebrew is forbidden. Of all the faiths it is probable that Mohammedanism has the greatest freedom, though even Islam comes under the general ban. Fearing the fanaticism of the Eastern peoples, and in view of the general political stake in the Mohammedan East, Communism tolerates, in spite of its decrees, the religious schools of the Mohammedans. But complete freedom from persecution obtains only among the semi-barbarian heathen peoples, toward whom the Bolsheviks act carefully, as towards ethnographic survivals. As a result of this strange religious policy, paganism in the form of religious dualism, conjurst, and similar forms, has experienced during recent years an unexpected revival in far corners of Russia, even in the parts which from time immemorial have been Orthodox.

CHAPTER IV

THE "RENOVATION" SCHISM

THE new religious policy of the Communist power has not been limited to the spread of atheistic propaganda. As regards the Orthodox Church, efforts have even been made to rupture it from within—and in part successfully. In the spring of 1922 a schism took place in the Church which even up to the present divides it into two, although unequal, parts. In order to understand this so-called "Living Church" or "Renovated Church" schism it is necessary to make certain explanations.

Up to the present time the minutes of the councils of the central organs of the Communist Party on Church questions have not been published, so we do not know who is principally responsible for inspiring the religious policy of the Party. But so far as the views of the leaders find expression in the Party Press, we note two points of view. One, which we may call doctrinaire, struggles with religion as such, with every sort of religion, making no distinction between religious forms. For Communists of this type, rationalistic and democratic confessions seem the most dangerous, because they are more deceptive for the masses. "No compromise with religion" is their watchword. The other type may be called opportunists, they recognize the energy alive in religious "prejudices," and desire to root them out step by step; for

these the change from Orthodox conservative forms of religion to more free or sectarian forms is considered desirable. They maintain, for instance, that Protestantism and the rationalistic sects are stages in the wearing out of Christianity, and are willing to grant them comparative support. The Baptists in Russia received from Lenin himself the privilege of free preaching, and even special Red passports, guaranteeing them this privilege. The same refers to certain other sects, Seventh Day Adventists, Pashkovites, and others.

But the granting of relatively free activity to these sects did not weaken the dominating place of the persecuted Orthodox Church. A group of Communists, therefore, got the idea of an Orthodox "Reformation," a reformation representing principally political interests. The question before them was the following: Might it not be possible, in place of the incorrigible, fundamentally counter-revolutionary Tikhon Church to create a democratic, revolutionary Church, loyal to the Soviet power? Although the "sovietization" of the whole Orthodox Church might not be accomplished, yet it should be possible to chip off from it a revolutionary minority, and with its help to establish a dictatorship in the Church similar to that existing in the universities and in literature. In the universities there had just been made the successful experiment with "Red professors." Leaning on the handful of professors who called themselves socialists, and on the Comsomol, the Party was able to master the higher schools. October in the universities, October in the theatre, why not October in the Church?

Such, approximately, was the trend of thought which, in 1922, led the Party to the staging of a Church revolution. This was a victory of the opportunists over the doctrinaires, although for the Church it brought a new wave of terror. It is not without reason that from this time on, Church policy is directed not from the Commissariat of Justice but from the terrible G.P.U. (the new name of the Tchéka). At the head of the ecclesiastical section of this institution there was placed a mysterious person, hitherto unknown, a certain Tutchkoff, who at the present time occupies in Russia the position of secret, so to speak underground (similar to all the institutions of the G.P.U.), Ober-procuror of the Russian Church.

But neither the G.P.U. nor the Party was able openly to take upon itself the organizing of the Church revolution. It was not so much the constitutional freedom of conscience as the atheistic ethics of the Party which made any participation in the reformation of the Church impossible for them. For this they found other people. We have already acquainted ourselves with the democratic movement in the clergy and with its failures in the Moscow Sobor. Remaining in the minority, the clerical democrats did not leave the Church but worked in it, without meeting opposition, in spite of the conservative attitude of the majority. Those siding with Communist social principles were able to advance their ideas from church pulpits, especially in the workingmen's sections. Such a person was the priest Boyarsky in Petrograd. His Christian Communism did not hinder him from being a professor in the Theological

Institute, which in the first years of the revolution succeeded the old Theological Academy. Another Petrograd liberal priest, Alexander Vvedensky, brought certain reforms into the Liturgy, endeavouring to harmonize mystical Christianity and modern culture. His brilliant sermons made him one of the most popular priests in the former capital; the Metropolitan Benjamin, valuing his zeal and talent, maintained toward him an attitude of paternal friendliness and took him as companion during his pastoral visits. A third representative of the movement, the priest Egoroff, beginning also with the reform of the cult and the establishing of a Communist brotherhood, did not remain within the fold of the Church, but died as the head of the small community of sectarians, consisting largely of intelligentzia. Notwithstanding the tolerance exercised by the hierarchy toward such radical priests, the latter were unsatisfied. They thirsted for a fundamental rejuvenation of the Church, a real reformation, and in this they found themselves in agreement with desires proceeding from the headquarters of the Communist Party.

We do not know the moment of formation of this unnatural union of Church reformers with atheists which appeared in the open in the spring of 1922. Did the Communists support a movement spontaneously arising within the Church, or did they themselves project it, in collaboration with revolutionary churchmen? The latter seems the more likely (in certain particulars) but, as I must repeat, we have no direct evidence of this.

As is well known, the occasion for the schism was the terrible famine of 1921-1922 and the related

question of the confiscation of the church treasures. In August, 1921, the Patriarch called upon the Church to make collections on behalf of the famine sufferers, creating an All-Russian Church Committee for the Help of Famine Sufferers, but this organization was disbanded by the Bolsheviks, who feared any organized public effort, especially of the Church, and the sum which it had collected was taken over by the Government Committee. The distrust came from both sides: the authorities feared the initiative of the Church; the Church, like all the intelligentzia, distrusted the authorities, fearing that the money collected for the famine-stricken would be spent for other purposes. This disintegrated the desire to meet the national calamity and dampened the spirit of sacrifice. In February, 1922, in all the (Bolshevist) papers there was begun a campaign for the confiscation of church treasures, in which fantastic estimates were made of their quantity and value. The Patriarch gave his permission (February 19) for the transfer to Government agents of objects which were not essential for the cult, but insisted on the transfer being voluntary. The Church desired to contribute, not to be the object of robbery.

It must be noted that the notion of private property had by no means died out, in spite of the abortive attempt of Communism, and both the population generally and the authorities felt that the ikons and sacred vessels, as heretofore, belonged to the Church. On February 23 a resolution was passed by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to proceed with the confiscation of church treasures and to transfer them to the organs of the Commissariat of

Finance for aiding the famine-stricken. The Patriarch replied to this decree by his encyclical of February 28, in which he stated: "We call upon faithful followers of the Church even at the present moment to make such contributions, desiring only that these contributions may be the response of a loving heart to the needs of a neighbour, only that they may actually provide real help to our suffering brothers. But we cannot approve the withdrawal from the churches, even though it be by voluntary contribution, of the sacred objects, whose use for other than services of worship is forbidden by the canons of the Œcumenical Church, and is punishable as sacrilege—laymen by excommunication, ordained persons by dismissal from Orders."

This epistle clearly forbade the clergy to turn over church sacred objects to agents of the Government. Evidently, however, the authorities consciously sought conflict, desiring to discredit the Church in the eyes of the people. The conditions laid down by the Patriarch, in the absence of a free Press, remained unknown to the broad masses. To show up the Church as the enemy of the suffering and dying population was more advantageous to the Communists than, in agreement with the Church, to receive the treasures which they demanded. The confiscation was effected throughout Russia (principally by tearing off the precious metals and jewels from ikons), but led to the opposite results. For the first time since the events of early 1918, the masses showed readiness to defend the things they held sacred. The people, who had permitted the desecration of relics, rose in defence of ikons. Yet there was no general revolt. Crowds of

people surrounded the churches, hindering the commissions from carrying away the treasures, in some places making use of fists and stones. The priest Krasnitzky, at the trial of the Petrograd Metropolitan Benjamin, stated that there were 1,414 local cases of sanguinary excesses.[1] The decree was carried out in full, yet the robbing of the churches gave the People's Commissariat of Finance altogether only 23,997 puds of silver, and a certain quantity of gold and jewels[2]—a figure which the official organ recognized as ridiculously small.[3] The wealth of the Church turned out to be a myth.

But the "sanguinary excesses" claimed still more bloody victims than fell in the local disturbances. In each city in Russia court trials were begun. Thousands of priests, bishops, and laymen were brought to trial before revolutionary tribunals, now held in public as distinguished from the trials of 1918-1920. Everywhere death sentences were passed. Scores of executions mark this fatal summer (1922) for the Church. In the Moscow trial, which took place in May and resulted in eleven death sentences, the Patriarch gave evidence as a witness. As the author of the February epistle, he asked that all the guilt might be borne by himself. As a result he was deprived of liberty (confined in a monastery) and remanded for trial. This was the moment which the revolutionary group in the clergy used for revolt.

[1] *Pravda,* No. 110, 1922. Moscow.

[2] The figures when put into English weight equivalents are, approximately: gold, 993 lbs.; silver, 823,267 lbs.; pearls, 10 lbs.; platinum, etc., 2,971 lbs.; diamonds, etc., 1,313 carats.

[3] *Izvestia Vzik.* December 19, 1922. Moscow.

From the very beginning of the campaign, the Petrograd group came out openly, in meetings and in newspapers, in favour of the confiscation of the treasures on behalf of the famine-stricken. The priest Vvedensky spoke with passionate eloquence, winning over a great many. Certainly the conscience of many of the faithful was torn by conflicting claims. They wanted to contribute, but were indignant at enforced confiscation. They gladly gave up the "treasures," but wished to retain the "holy things"—even though it be by providing the money equivalent of them.

In response to the encyclical of the Patriarch, the Petrograd group replied by a sharp letter in the newspapers, heralding the beginning of the schism. After the arrest of the Patriarch, the priests Vvedensky and Bielkoff, together with their Moscow fellow-worker, Kalinovsky, visited the Patriarch (May 12) in prison, with the permission of the authorities. They referred to the death sentences which had been passed, putting responsibility for them on the Patriarch, and, for the welfare of the Church, demanded his temporary abdication until the convening of a Sobor. The Patriarch, factually deprived of the possibility of administering the affairs of the Church (being in prison), signed a memorandum turning over the temporary administration of the Church to the senior Metropolitan, Agathangel of Jaroslavl. The actual text of the Patriarch's memorandum in reply to the written demand of the delegation reads as follows: "The persons named above (*i.e.*, the priests signing the request) to accept and transmit to His Grace, the Metropolitan Agathangel, on his arrival in Moscow, the affairs of the Synod, with the participation of the

secretary Numeroff." This clearly states that this group of opposition priests was authorized to be the link between the imprisoned Patriarch and the Metropolitan Agathangel. Such are the facts, communicated by the Patriarch himself after his release (in the encyclical, July 15, 1923), and recognized even by the official historian of the Renovated Church.[1]

But the group of Church revolutionaries, distorting the plain meaning of the memorandum, built upon it the foundation of a Church revolution. They announced that the Patriarch had abdicated and had transferred authority to them—*i.e.*, to the new Higher Church Administration. They proposed to Agathangel of Jaroslavl that he enter the revolutionary Higher Church Administration, thus legalizing the revolution. After his refusal, Agathangel was arrested and exiled to Narym, a most unhealthy region of Siberia. In compensation for this refusal, two bishops (Antonin and Leonid) joined the priest-revolutionaries, and the new Higher Church Administration, accepting also some laymen into its membership, announced itself the supreme authority in the Russian Orthodox Church. On May 14, in the *Izvestia* of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, there was published the declaration of the revolutionaries. Beginning by extolling the Soviet Government, it concluded by charging the Church with counter-revolutionary activity, even with attempts to "create a *coup d'état*."

The Metropolitan Agathangel was able, before his exile, to issue an encyclical prohibiting relationships

[1] Professor Titlinoff, "The New Church," p. 55. Petrograd, 1923.

with the new Higher Church Administration, and the priest Vvedensky was excommunicated by the Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd. The response to this action came in the form of a fearful explosion of the terror. The Higher Church Administration deprived of their robes all bishops and priests who declined to recognize its authority, and the G.P.U. immediately arrested them. These two institutions worked in close contact. Practically all the bishops loyal to the Patriarch were arrested that summer (1922); most of them were exiled. Beginning with this period, exiling to remote places in Russia or Siberia took the place of execution (although not always) in the practice of the G.P.U. It must not be forgotten that simultaneously the public trials of those who had hindered the confiscation of church treasures were continued. In Petrograd, after a sensational trial, the Metropolitan Benjamin and three other persons were shot.[1] His meekness, his readiness to suffer death for Christ, his great modesty, his exceptional thoughtfulness for others, for the welfare of the Church—made an ineradicable impression on all the witnesses of this great trial, even in the ranks of the Communists. He became a veritable martyr for the Russian Church. The Renovated priests, among them Krasnitzky, who gave false evidence before the court, immediately became traitors in the eyes of the people. The stone thrown by an old woman at the head of Vvedensky was an expression of the general hatred toward him which had taken the place of his former popularity.

[1] *Cf.* account of one who attended the trial, published in "The Assault of Heaven."

Under the threat of imprisonment and possible execution, and being without bishops, the larger part of the rank and file of the priesthood recognized, unwillingly, the authority of the Higher Church Administration. The Government recognized only the H.C.A. as *de facto* at the head of the Orthodox Church in Russia; the Patriarch and all who followed him were placed in a half-outlaw condition. The Patriarchal Church went underground. Services of worship in private homes, and secret bishops, gave it a "catacomb" character. It seemed as though the Renovation had won a great victory. It was at this time that it developed a programme of reform, with which we shall become acquainted.

It must be noted, however, that the movement was not unified. It immediately broke up into several groups, organized along the line of parties. Practically each one of the leaders had his own personal "Church"—*i.e.*, a group of priests subordinated to the general Higher Administration. Krasnitzky headed the "Living Church," Antonin "The Union of Church Regeneration," Vvedensky the "Union of Parishes of the Ancient-Apostolic Church." The Living Church at first was the strongest of these organizations. For the broad masses its name became the general title of the movement. Under this name (*The Living Church*) a journal was issued, which reflected the original reforming passion of the movement. Some of these groups were more radical, others more conservative, but, looking at them as a whole, one is astonished to see how insignificant are the purely religious or ecclesiastical motives of their reformation and how preponderant and dispropor-

tionate the revolutionary character of their tactical methods and phraseology.

First of all, these groups endeavoured to remain and to call themselves Orthodox. They did not encroach upon any of the dogmas or Sacraments of the Church. They had no particular theological idea whatever to put as the basis of the new reformation. Their ideas were such as had been commonplace in Orthodox liberalism, proceeding from the early Slavophils, from Vladimir Solovieff, and others. One can say with certainty that these ideas are shared by many of the representatives of the Tikhon Church: such as the idea of the legitimacy of development, of progress in Church forms, in legislation, in the cult, in theological thought. One can discover only a general spirit of rationalism, only the absence of feeling for the mystical and the ascetic side of religion. There were certain echoes of Protestantism in the unsuccessful attempt to abandon the cult of relics—a question which was presented at the first Reformed Sobor, but, meeting with opposition, remained undecided.

The entire reformation was directed along the line of the cult and the canonical structure of the Church. For some the reform of the cult found expression in the movement toward simplification, towards comprehensibility—hence the conducting of Liturgy in the Russian language (as against the usual Church-Slavonic). Others—*e.g.*, Vvedensky, Antonin—wished to conduct the eucharistic ceremony openly before the congregation, though in the Eastern Church it has always been mysteriously celebrated in the sanctuary, behind the screen of the "Royal Doors." In the new practice, the doors were not

closed, the secret eucharistic prayers were recited aloud (Vvedensky), finally, the sanctuary lost its significance and the altar was placed in the middle of the church (Antonin).

The general programme of canonical reforms was dictated less by the spirit of Protestantism than by the "class" claims of the White (married) clergy, turned simultaneously against the episcopacy and against the laity. The second marriage of the clergy—*i.e.*, permission for widowed priests to marry a second time—and the appointing of bishops from the White (married) clergy—these were the two chief points of reform. The following is a characterization of the tendencies of the first Reformed Congress (August, 1922) by one who joined the movement but who was without the enthusiasm of the first period:[1] "The chief attention of the Congress was directed towards the struggle with monasticism and monastic influence, and toward the strengthening of the leading rôle for the White clergy." The Congress emphasized the dangerous influence of monasticism in the fate of the Church and practically made an end to the monastic institution. It demanded the closing of all city-monasteries (a few still remained) and their transformation into parish churches, for the reason that monks have no place in ordinary life. The village monasteries were to be transformed into working brotherhoods, similar to the usual type of agricultural communes and producing co-operatives; otherwise into clinics, asylums, or homes for the aged, with the requirement that the monks should learn the requisite occupations. As regards those monks holding hierarchical positions who

[1] Titlinoff, "The New Church," pp. 14 *ff.*

opposed the renovation of the Church, the Congress requested the new Church authority to depose them immediately, and to deal similarly with such persons in future.

"For the improvement of the episcopacy, the Congress proposed that immediately, without awaiting the Sobor, episcopal appointments be opened not only to widowers but to married clergy. In order to crush all Church counter-revolution, the Congress recommended the *most decisive measures*, up to *deportation* of the guilty from their dioceses. Incidentally, the Congress resolved to *disband immediately those parish councils* which opposed the Renovation Movement, and to form new councils consisting of persons recommended by the priest and made responsible to him. The opponents of this resolution were threatened by punishment, even up to excommunication. Discussing the future internal construction of the Church, the Congress went so far as to pass a resolution recognizing as fully franchised laymen only those who carry out in life the principles of the Living Church."

The dictatorship of the parish priest is expressed in this resolution in a most radical form. However, "deportation from the diocese" might be carried out only by the Government authorities—G.P.U. The resolution thereby recognizes the connection between the Living Church and this institution. It is in the relation of the Renovated Church to the State that one finds the key to the understanding of the schism.

The Living Church rising against the Church of the Patriarch accused the latter of political counter-revolution. In the avowal of the political sins of the old Church (under the Tsar's régime) lies the prin-

cipal source of the revolutionary sentiment of the Living Church. "The Church must be essentially the expression of union of love and truth, and not a political organization, not a counter-revolutionary party," proclaims the declaration of this group the day after their revolt.[1] However, it did not even attempt to maintain a non-political position. The document just cited begins with a characterization of the positive achievements of the Soviet Government and expresses regret that "the Church actually remained aloof in this struggle in the cause of truth and the welfare of mankind." The journal *The Living Church*, conducted a campaign in defence of the Christian meaning of the Communist revolution. Although not all the groupings of the Renovation were draped to the same extent in Red bunting yet the Sobor of 1923 proclaimed the Communist revolution a "Christian creation." "The sun of social truth shone above the world on October 25, 1917 . . . though unbelieving, the Government has undertaken the task which we, believing Christians, must fulfil," stated Vvedensky in his speech proposing an expression of thanks to Lenin as "the tribune of social truth." The resolution of the Sobor states: "Having listened to the report of the Archpriest Vvedensky, the All-Russian Sobor of the Orthodox Church proclaims to the Church and to all mankind that at the present moment all the world is divided into two classes: the capitalist-exploiters and the proletariat, by whose labour and blood the capitalist world has constructed its fortunate state. In all the world only the Soviet Government of Russia has undertaken the struggle with this social

[1] *Izvestia Vzik*, No. 106, May 14, 1922.

evil. Christians cannot be passive observers in this struggle. The Sobor proclaims capitalism a deadly sin, and struggle with it the sacred duty of Christians. The Congress calls attention to the fact that the Soviet power, in its system of government, alone in the whole world is realizing the ideals of the Kingdom of God. Consequently, every believing churchman must not only be a loyal citizen, but also persistently struggle in union with the Soviet power for the realizing of the ideals of the Kingdom of God."

The Renovated Sobor in January, 1925, in its congratulation to the Government, had the bad taste to call this mixture from the Gospels and Marxism "religious Leninism," forgetting Lenin's avowed godlessness. The same Sobor requested the Government's "favourable attention" in view of the "unquestioned value of its work for the State." "This (the Renovation Movement) must unquestionably promote the improvement of the standing of the Soviet Government, even among its enemies abroad, and the final strengthening of the Soviet régime within."

In the two years between the Sobor of 1923 and the Sobor of 1925, the revolutionary sentiment faded. Instead of world revolution there had taken place only the strengthening of the Soviet régime in Russia. This evolution partly corresponds to the evolution of Communistic policy. Only one thing remains clear, the continued endeavour of the Renovated Church to remain under the protection of the Government. Herein lies the key to the whole movement. The idea of social revolution, it is true, governed the Russian

masses during the first years after "October," but it took on such a clearly atheistic character that it remained foreign to the bosom of the Church. Sympathy with Communism was very rarely met with in the Church. The ordinary parish clergy, entirely unrelated to the people (*cf.* the resolution of the August Congress, 1922) and nurtured throughout the centuries in the spirit of bureaucratic submission to the State, was entirely immune to infection by the principles of the revolution. This infection was injected by a few priests-democrats: Vvedensky, Boyarsky. Krasnitzky was a doubtful character. He had always been known as an extreme monarchist, a member of the "Russian Assembly," who, while a student in the Theological Academy, wrote a dissertation against socialism and, at the time of the famous Beiliss affair in 1913, made a speech about Jews using Christian blood in their cult. Among the Living Churchmen there were a great number of former monarchists—"black hundreds"—but most of the adherents were passive or indifferent.

It is characteristic of the membership of the movement that there participated in it not so much the younger as the older groups of the clergy, "respectable" priests, etc. For this group the thought of loss of Government protection was unbearable. Not being ready to suffer martyrdom, imprisonment, or exile, it sought the mercy of the new authority without any particularly difficult compromises with its religious conscience. Hence comes the peculiar combination of moderation in religious programme with verbal radicalism in politics. The Red formulæ of the revolution were simply expressions of servility, and sub-

mission to the authorities was the favourite theme in Renovated sermons.

In this manner the traditions of the old Synodical Church continue to live in the Renovated Church. Only the phraseology is changed, the spirit remains the same. It would be a great mistake to give verbal credence to the Renovated and construe the opposition between them and the Patriarchal Church to be the opposition between revolution and counter-revolution. Church counter-revolution certainly exists—outside Russia, in the emigration (more precisely, in certain parts of the emigration). The Patriarchal Church is the Church cleansed in the fire of the revolution, internally deeply non-political. The Renovated Church is the old, traditional ecclesiastical order only camouflaged in revolutionary colour. Neither a revolutionary Church nor even a revolutionary sect was constituted in Russia, for there was no place for it. The Russian Revolution was anti-religious, and religion was not revolutionary. This fact, which has deeply disappointed many who longed for reformation, must be borne in mind in order to understand the meaning of events in recent Russian Church history.

The professional programme of the Renovated clergy (as distinct from the reforming programme of its leaders) was realized in the Sobor of May, 1923. This Congress, which the Renovated consider the Second Sobor of the Russian Church after revolution, was in point of fact the Sobor of a separatist fraction. The partisans of the Patriarch did not participate in it. At this Sobor, monasticism was practically liquidated. Second marriage of the clergy was permitted, and the "White episcopacy" was estab-

lished. A great number of priests received mitres—the new Church had practically no canonical bishops. Readers and lower clergy were made into priests. There was opened a wide field for personal ambition. Vvedensky, from being a priest, was immediately made Metropolitan, and soon thereafter, in recognition of his service as preacher, was given the title of "Apologist-Evangelist."

The Patriarch remained in prison, but not abdicating his post, as the Living Churchmen had announced. To complete the revolution there remained for them nothing else but to degrade him. They condemned the Patriarch *in absentia*, though he declined to recognize himself as under the jurisdiction of this Sobor. The trial consisted of listening to three accusatory speeches without defence or witnesses. Moreover, consent to the prosecution of the Patriarch was one of the points in the questionnaire which had to be filled in by members of the Sobor before it began its work, and, consequently, a condition for participation in it. The judgment on the Patriarch was included in the political resolution from which we have already quoted, and which still further emphasized the political character of this action: "The Holy Sobor of the Orthodox Church in 1923 condemns the counter-revolutionary struggle and its methods—methods of hatred of mankind. In particular the Sobor grieves at the anathema proclaimed on the Soviet Government and on all those adhering to it. The Sobor announces that this anathema has no validity. On the basis of Church canon the Sobor hereby proclaims the Patriarch Tikhon deprived of his position and of monastic status and returned to his former lay

condition. Hereafter the Patriarch Tikhon is the layman Vasily Belavin." The Sobor proclaimed the Patriarchate itself to be a counter-revolutionary institution and abolished it.

When they informed the Patriarch Tikhon, in his imprisonment, of the resolution of the Sobor, he wrote on it: "Not valid. The humble Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia."

But the triumph of the Renovated was imaginary and turned out to be short-lived. They were able, having the friendly collaboration of the G.P.U., to seize the majority of the churches and even to attract a large portion of the White clergy. But their influence on the laymen was entirely insignificant. We quote the words of the moderate Renovated laymen, cited above, summarizing the results of the first stage of the movement: "The first sin of the ecclesiastical-renovated movement lay in its separating from the Church masses. The Living Church was unable to attract the lay elements into the sphere of its influence."[1] Yet the financial basis of the Church lay in the laity, in their voluntary contributions. Very soon the Renovated were obliged to feel the influence of this powerful factor. Episcopal mitres constituted poor compensation for empty Church treasuries. The emptiness of the churches themselves was plain evidence of the attitude of the people.

We have said that in the first months after the revolution the Church was prepared even to accept an illegal position, "to enter the catacombs." In this condition the episcopate found itself. For the parish priesthood, however, there remained another way out,

[1] Titlinoff, "The New Church," p. 20.

which many took advantage of. Discontinuing the mention of the Patriarch in the cult, they nevertheless declined to submit to the new Higher Church Administration, announcing themselves—*i.e.*, their parishes—to be Autocephalic. This condition was canonically absurd, but legally invulnerable under the Soviet Constitution. The Patriarchal Church was broken up into a mass of separate communes with secret connection between them. The authorities had no more basis for persecuting them than any sectarians. There was even an heroic minority which made no compromise and continued to pray for the Patriarch unafraid of arrest. After the period of the sharpest terror (executions) had passed, the strength of these confessors was triumphant over the weakness of the timid. Priests of the Renovated began a mass return to the Patriarchal Church. They were gladly received on condition of public penitence.

One may well ask why the authorities did not exert their entire strength in order to destroy the Patriarchal Church. But it must be remembered that in the policy of the Soviet Government toward religion there has never been complete unanimity. In 1923 we see in its Press the domination of the tendency which we have called doctrinaire. The Communists cast ridicule upon the new Church. The organization of the Living Church is called by the *Izvestia* an ecclesiastical N.E.P. trust (No. 220, 1922). Particularly characteristic is the speech of Bukharin, delivered after the closing of the Living Church Sobor, stating that the Sobor did not live up to the expectations of the Government. The Living Church people did not secure the confidence or esteem of the mass of the

faithful, who saw in them only deserters and heretics. Bukharin is in favour of liquidating the present Higher Church Administration, looking upon the activity of Antonin and his collaborators as "*petit-bourgeois* habits." "The churches must be wiped off the face of the earth as the breeding ground of counter-revolution. The struggle against the Church should be entrusted to comrade Dzerjinsky (the then head of the G.P.U.). Citizen Belavin should be executed."

However Utopian the first part of Bukharin's demands (regarding the Church) may have been, the threat was very real as concerned the Patriarch. From all the corners of Russia there were received (as always, inspired) resolutions of workers' and peasants' gatherings demanding the death sentence for the Patriarch. Equally loud was the expression of dissatisfaction on the part of European public opinion. One can believe that the circumstances of international politics (particularly the English attitude) averted the fate which was being prepared for the Patriarch. The trial was several times postponed, showing the uncertainty of the authorities. In the last analysis, although the Bukharin method was not to be used in destroying the Church, yet the struggle against all religions was to be continued, and, consequently, there was no ground for supporting the Living Church. Yet it should be allowed to live, for the existence of a schism was profitable for anti-religious propaganda—much more useful, indeed, than a revolutionary State Church. The Living Church might be able to seduce "those little ones." As the *Izvestia* wrote, "the Revolution and the Soviet power is least of all in need

of verbal expressions of loyalty on the part of the Church. For us it is sufficient if the Church seriously and finally ceases counter-revolutionary activity." But the Bolsheviks knew very well that the Patriarch was not guilty of counter-revolution. We have seen that as early as in September, 1919, he addressed to the clergy an encyclical concerning the non-participation of the Church in politics and advising "submission to the instructions of the Soviet Government when they are not contrary to faith and conscience."

The Patriarch had been ready to sacrifice personal ambition for the sake of the Church and now he confirmed his position. We have no information regarding the negotiations which led to the publication of the well-known letter of June 16, 1923, but it is clear that the Patriarch speaks in good faith. In this letter he recognizes his guilt before the Soviet Government at the beginning of the revolution, he promises to exhibit loyalty in relation to the Soviet Government, and rejects the monarchist movement inside Russia as well as in the emigrations. (The last point is in reference to the Sobor held in December, 1921, in Sremsky Karlovtzi, Jugoslavia, at which, under the presidency of Antony Khrapovitzky, there was passed a resolution concerning the necessity of restoring the Romanoff dynasty in Russia.)

Judging by its style of composition, the document signed by the Patriarch could not have been composed by him. He signed the prepared text, sacrificing its form. This sacrifice brought him comparative freedom, and to the Church its head. The charge against him was dropped, and he passed the last year and a half of his life in the Don Monastery (Moscow) under

the surveillance of agents, but able to receive visitors and to go to the Moscow churches to officiate at services. Tutchkoff did not let him out of sight. The meeting of the Patriarch with the bishops was made difficult in the extreme. Nevertheless, the return of its head to the Church had a great moral significance. The masses met their "Father" with enthusiasm. The ranks of the Renovated melted rapidly. Churches, together with penitent priests, were turned into "Tikhon" churches. Soon the number of the Renovated churches in the cities fell to about one-third of the total number—a proportion which is maintained up to the present time. According to the latest information received from Russia, in the summer of 1927, the number of the Orthodox Tikhon parishes is 35,000, that of the Renovated 17,000 (the Ukrainian Autocephalic Church 3,000).

The Patriarch Tikhon died on March 8, 1925. His death made a tremendous impression on the whole of Orthodox Russia. Hundreds of thousands crowded to his funeral in the Don Monastery. This demonstration of popular love and faithfulness reminded the Moscow population of the great funeral of Lenin. Before his death the Patriarch signed a document, analogous to the letter of 1923, in which he bequeathed to his successors loyalty to the Soviet power, and once again condemned the Karlovtzi bishops. The authenticity of this "testament" was questioned, but without adequate grounds. The Metropolitan Peter, one of the three candidates named by the Patriarch for the post of *locum tenens*, certifies to its authenticity. The election of a new Patriarch was impossible for the reason that the

authorities would not grant the old Church permission to hold a Sobor. The administration of the Church came into the hands of a "guardian of the Patriarchal throne." The Metropolitan Peter, who declined the Renovated proposal of peace, was soon arrested, and authority actually passed into the hands of the Metropolitan Sergius of Nijni-Novgorod.

In the beginning of 1926 this bishop had made efforts to conduct the election of a Patriarch by means of a circular memorandum vote of the bishops, and this was made the occasion for the new devastation of the Orthodox hierarchy in 1926. Not only Sergius, but a whole series of "successors" were arrested, one after the other. Yet the name of the *locum tenens* Peter continued to be used in the ritual, and the memory of the Patriarch Tikhon was stronger than any hierarchical force in holding the Church together.

The evolution of the Renovated movement during the last few years is extraordinarily characteristic. It has endeavoured more and more with each year to smooth over the traces of its revolutionary origin. Already in the autumn of 1923 it announced the discharge of those of its groups whose names had become hateful to the people. Since Krasnitzky and Bishop Antonin declined to submit to this decision, the Living Church and The Union of Regeneration drag along their existence as little sects, each defying the other. The Renovated desire no other title than Orthodox. At the 1923 Sobor, the Metropolitan Alexander Vvedensky, who continues the leader of the movement, announced: "Renovation is Orthodoxy, and the Renovated are Orthodox." Since their

Church is now headed not by the Higher Church Administration but by a Synod (here also a return to tradition), it became proper to call it the "Synodical Church." In order to present greater semblance of canonicity, the Synod elected as its chairman the Bishop Eudokim, whose consecration in the episcopacy dated from long before the schism.

At the 1925 Sobor the extremes of the first years of the movement were condemned. It was resolved to avoid appointing married bishops. They had long ago given up the new calendar, also under the pressure of the conservative masses. The Patriarch Basil III., of Constantinople, sent a complimentary epistle to the Sobor of 1925, and it seems that certain other Eastern Patriarchs have also formally or informally recognized the Synodical Church. In general the Orthodox East, deceived by the name "synodical," tends to see in it a direct continuance of the old Synodical Church. From the canonical point of view this is entirely wrong. The old Russian Church inheritance lives in the Patriarchal Church. But if one speaks of the spirit of the old Synodical Church, of bureaucratic subjection to the State, then one may say that in the present Synodical Church there truly lives the synodical spirit, not "renovated" by the revolution. Politics, together with hatred for the memory of the Patriarch, alone distinguish the Synodical Church from the Patriarchal. The speech of the Metropolitan Vvedensky in opening the Sobor of 1925 was an out and out political denunciation.[1]

[1] Cf. *Viestnik Sviatieshevo Synoda Rossieskoy Pravoslavnoy Tserkvi* (Organ of the Renovated Synodical Church), No. 1-2, 1926. Moscow.

Realizing the failure of the movement, the Renovated several times endeavoured to make peace with the Tikhon Church on the basis of recognition of its hierarchy. Small groups of Tikhon priests and even bishops (winter of 1925-1926) were prepared to enter upon such an agreement. But they stumbled on the protesting conscience of the Church people, who could not forgive the Renovated the blood which they had shed or the betrayal of their brother priests to the anti-Christian Government. Arrests of bishops and priests of the Patriarchal Church, exile to Siberia, to Solovki, etc., were almost an everyday occurrence. A letter from Russia printed in the Russian emigrant Press in July, 1927, gives the names and cathedra of 117 bishops who were in exile on January 1, 1927. The letter adds that this list is not complete; regarding 40 exiled bishops definite information is lacking.[1] And on every occasion, as is not denied by the G.P.U., the grounds for condemnation lay in denunciation by some one of the Renovated priests.

The Synodicals themselves were not subject to repression. Notwithstanding the contempt with which the Communists look upon them, the Government organs have had two distinct attitudes towards the Church groups. Only the Synodicals have been permitted to issue an official organ, to publish brochures (polemical); certain of their leaders have been able even to hold public lectures. It would appear that, among the Orthodox, the Metropolitan Vvedensky enjoys a monopoly of public religious addresses in Russia. He travels throughout the whole of Russia with lectures on various religious subjects, even

[1] *Posliednia Novosti.* Paris Russian daily. July 22, 1927.

appearing in debates against the Communists. By way of privilege, he is permitted publicly to defend Christianity. One of his debates with Lunacharsky created a strong impression on Father d'Herbigny, who notes this in the report of his visit to Russia. The reverend author was unable, unfortunately, to secure any interviews with representatives of the Patriarchal Church (meetings with foreigners subjected them to dangers). Consequently he condemned the old Church and received an entirely erroneous impression regarding the essentials of disagreement (the question of priests shaving their beards, and the struggle for the calendar seems to occupy his principal attention).[1]

A brief summary may be in order. We do not deny the existence of disinterested reformatory endeavours on the part of certain leaders of the schism, nor that this tendency follows the line of the old liberal movement in the Russian Church. But these ideological tendencies from the very beginning were ruined by the crimes of political intriguers and later submerged in the shadow of old régime opportunism. The miserable failure of the reformation has compromised for the future the healthy ideological contents of this movement.

A few words in regard to the Church in the Ukraine. Here the Church schism was complicated by the development of a third, so-called Autocephalic Ukrainian Church. Its tendency is definitely

[1] D'Herbigny, "L'Aspect Religieux de Moscou en Octobre, 1925." *Cf.* also the objective chronicle, published in the several numbers of the *Irenikon,* Catholic monthly. Amay-sur-Meuse, Belgium.

nationalistic. It takes its source from unwillingness to submit to the Moscow Patriarch. Not finding in the Ukraine a single bishop ready to become head of their Autocephalic Church, the priests-nationalists got along without bishops. Eventually they consecrated bishops for themselves by a ceremony unheard of in Orthodoxy, and broke off the Apostolic succession of the hierarchy. Hence comes their popular denomination as "self-consecrated." They conduct services in the Ukrainian tongue and have followers not so much in the villages as in the cities, among the nationalistic intelligentzia. In the Ukraine, therefore, we find three Church organizations struggling between themselves, and each calling itself Orthodox. Recently the self-consecrated were persecuted by the authorities, who suspect the political-separatist tendency of their movement. It would appear that the persecution has considerably weakened their Church. Only the Synodical Church receives the comparative protection of the authorities in the Ukraine.

CHAPTER V

THE INNER LIFE OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

In conclusion we should like to lift the curtain hiding the inner spiritual life of the persecuted but uncrushed Russian Church. All observers are in agreement that Russia, in spite of the apparent victory of Communism, is passing through a religious regeneration. But foreign observers are condemned to see only the externals, whereas the real Christian Russia is doomed to silence. We take the liberty, therefore, of concluding our review of the Church since the revolution with a rather long quotation from a letter from Russia printed in the Paris religious journal *Pout.*[1]

Now, as formerly, the Church is the national sanctuary. Nowhere but in the Church does one find the breaking down of class barriers, the liberating joy of unity, of communion between many people otherwise held far apart from each other. But the worshippers are not the same as ten years ago. Ordinary, simple folk no longer fill the churches. Rather one sees a majority of the intellectuals, particularly in the cities. These are of very different types and have been brought to the Church in many different ways. Some find in her arms consolation for their bereave-

[1] Pout, *Russian Religious-Philosophical Quarterly,* No. 2, pp. 3-12, "A Letter from Russia." Paris.

ment, some a shelter for their wounded love of country. Others, the young and hopeful, are not driven to her by sorrow and suffering, but are attracted by love and hope and by the youthful enthusiasm that the Church awakens in them. Many of our clergymen and bishops now come from the ranks of the laymen. It would be an exaggeration to say that the intellectuals outnumber the others, but they are a very considerable fraction of our congregations. Many workmen attend the suburban churches, as do many tradesmen. The latter have somewhat resumed their place in society, with the economic regeneration of the country, and, more than any other class, retain both the outward appearance and the conservative traditions of the old Russia.

And what of their numbers? They are very large, but it is difficult to say whether they form a minority or a majority of the nation. We have no accurate statistics, and can judge only by the size of our congregations. Our churches are filled, but not to overflowing. When we consider that the edifices turned over to the Living Church are practically empty, it would appear that the total attendance is smaller than before the revolution. Neither is it increasing rapidly. The terrible years of 1917-1920 were a period of religious revival. Since then conversions have been less frequent. That part of the intelligentzia which stood aloof from the Church is not caught up in the present stream of return to it, it is deeply rooted in the old trenches of positivism or absorbed in the search for material well-being. Among the city poor, the Baptists and different sects of "Brethren" find many new adherents. The simplicity of their moral

preaching and the strictness of their personal lives attract many. Among the cultured, the old infatuation for Tolstoi, theosophy, and even for Roman Catholicism has vanished. The Orthodox Church has rallied to itself practically all the truly religious-minded among our intellectuals. One consolation is that we have no more "dead leaves," in the phrase of Tiutcheff. None among us attends in order "to do the proper thing," or "to stand well in the community." On the contrary, some are prevented from attending because they hold official positions. Those who come pray here as perhaps they never before prayed.

In the villages we witness a different picture—although our knowledge of conditions there is far less general. We can judge only from what we see in villages near a railway, and consequently more or less influenced by city manners. Unquestionably Russia still has a great number of secluded corners where conditions remain as they have been for centuries, almost untouched by the revolution. But can there be many such corners, after the tremendous upheaval which rocked the very foundations of the nation?

The first thing we notice in the villages is that the churches are nearly empty. As a rule, only women and old men attend service. The youth have imbibed the teaching of atheism. The middle-aged who have come back from the war, after travelling far and wide over the world, have brought with them a large dose of scepticism, or at least religious indifference. Only now is the village living through a period of enlightenment, two hundred years behind the rest of Europe, but without special enthusiasm at that. The

sound common sense of our peasants makes them incurably suspicious of all kinds of theories, which have so much attraction for our city labourers. Nevertheless, this propaganda undermines the old faith. So the peasant is preoccupied just now with what he considers practical things. He has become intensely interested in the cultivation of the soil. He has lost the feeling of mystery that formerly surrounded his conceptions of agriculture. But he has a conservative instinct that makes him want to keep the Church as a ritualistic institution. Girls rarely consent to marry without a religious ceremony, and even the Communists are obliged to yield to this "superstition." Children are still baptized; the burial service is read; the traditional Church holidays are observed. There is a peculiar renaissance of ethnographic ceremonies, practically pagan, and recently even of real paganism in the North of Russia, resulting in a dual faith. But alongside you find new ideas which are penetrating into the villages by means of Communist newspapers, the cottage library, dramatic presentations, and the revolutionary songs of the youth.

As a rule, the village clergy have not passed through the purifying fire of persecution. They remain timid and oppressed, not much above their fellow villagers in culture and education. Materially they have lost some of their revenues, but the village still gives them enough to live upon—in any case more than the school-teachers. When at a certain period the schools were made dependent upon local support one after the other was closed. The Sobor of 1917-1918 had a noticeable effect in strengthening

the influence of laymen in the Church. The Bolshevist law separating Church and State turned the churches over to parish committees of twenty elected representatives. They keep the church building in repair, call and dismiss pastors, and exercise the fullest rights of congregational autonomy. Rarely does a bishop venture to interfere in a parish election. Consequently the priest's hold on his parish is entirely dependent on his moral and religious authority. Even matters of church policies and ritual are often taken out of his hands by the laymen. The parish committee determines whether the building is to belong to the Living or to the Patriarchal Church, whether the general policy is to be "extreme" or "moderate." As a rule, the laymen are conservative. A priest passing over to the Living Church is nearly always obliged to manœuvre so as to abolish the old committee and secure the election of a new one; but this usually results in an empty church and the break-up of the parish. Frequently the main support of the priest in the parish lies in the "brotherhoods," which exist both for men and women. They have a double purpose. They take care of the church building, they hold frequent (occasionally all night) prayer services, they have frequent corporate Communion; all this makes the brotherhood into a religious commune, sometimes living a very intense religious life. But it would be impossible not to mention here the darker sides of the brotherhoods, the dominating influence of the individual in the person of the priest, and of the occasional unhealthy exaltation of these organizations, which consist principally of women. During the period of the schism many of these organizations blindly followed

their priests into the Living Church Movement, and these circumstances seem to have cooled the enthusiasm for brotherhoods.

During the period of the imprisonment of the Patriarch, the exiling of bishops, and the apparent triumph of the Living Church, together with the defection and equivocation of many of the pastors, the hierarchical basis of the Church was badly shaken. Each Church lived its own life, not depending upon the authority of the central Church administration, frequently even developing a lack of faith in it. The faithful gathered around the few priests who remained firm, and occasionally even, figuratively, descended into "catacombs" or gave special attention to the voice of the "startzy." One can still note the traces of this peculiarity of parish life. The boundaries of episcopal authority remain undefined. A bishop who has shown himself to be a true confessor, who is a hierarch of strong will and severe life, may firmly rule the Church and depend upon obedience. But as a general rule the authority of the episcopacy is now weakened at the expense of the growing influence of the lower clergy and laymen. This does not contradict the increased longing for authority and a canonical basis for the life of the Church. However, spiritual authority frequently outweighs canonical authority. In this matter also the present moment is one of change. It is necessary to review and to make over many things. For instance, many of the darker aspects of parish democracy have come to light. There are well-founded charges that the exceptional influence of laymen in the parish at times interferes with the independence of the priest.

In church committees the voice of the more well-to-do part of the community has greater weight. Attracted by the beauty of the ritual and by financial success, it is sometimes inclined not to value moral purity or the spiritual zeal of the pastor.

The years of persecution were, for the Church, a period of weakening of its outward unity and solidarity. There were actually moments when it was without the administration and without a head except the Holy Spirit living in it. Perhaps herein is to be found the great miracle of its redemption and its indestructible inner solidarity. One should not overestimate the importance of various acts proceeding from even very highly placed hierarchical authority. Such acts were accepted or declined, according to the degree to which they satisfied the hidden mysterious consciousness of the Church. The Patriarch was the living heart of Russia, in him was concentrated the love and prayers of the whole Church; as a result, there moved in the Church an invisible, blessed power. But it is not possible to measure this power by the administrative actions of the Patriarch. In the absence of freedom of speech and the difficulties attending personal conversations, these actions were variously construed, troubling some and contradicted by others. But never did they lead to a crisis, and never did they shake the reverence for him who was looked upon as the vicarious sufferer for the whole of the Russian Church. The Patriarch was the praying protector and the voluntary sacrifice for the whole of Russia, rather than its leader and administrator, and the way chosen by him, in spite of all uncertainties and recognized mistakes, was the

way of salvation. In this it is impossible not to see the special outpouring of Grace, which has not departed from Russia.

What have been the spiritual fruits plainly produced within the Russian Church? I shall begin with the most evident, visible to all observers. We have witnessed a remarkable adornment of Divine service. It now possesses a severe beauty that could not formerly be found. Never before has it been performed in so solemn and spiritual a manner. And although the secret of this new revelation of spiritual beauty lies principally in the deep faith of the serving priest, yet the new spirit has taken hold of all those worshipping in the churches, giving clarity and a richness of impression to each word of the reader, every exclamation of the deacon. In nearly all, even in the smallest churches, there are beautiful choirs. The faithful are loath to quit the temple. They love the long services, sometimes lasting on festival days for five hours.

The reformation of the ritual proclaimed by the Living Church followed the line of returning to old forms of worship, reviving forgotten ritualistic traditions. In the attempt to enrich the ritual, the North borrowed somewhat from the Orthodox Ukraine. Such, for instance, was the acceptance of the Lenten "Passion" and the service of burial of the Virgin at the all-night vigil service before Assumption. In a few cases, though this is with great circumspection, new prayers have been introduced into the ritual.

But it is clear to all that the living meaning of the ritual is revealed in the eucharistic service, in the inner attitude of the faithful toward it. For many it

has again become a true mystery. The Cup is seldom presented in vain; many take Communion and all share in their joy. They speak of a "Eucharistic Movement" in the Russian Church, which may be considered as the fruit of the work of Father John of Kronstadt, though there is yet no uniformity in practice. This is a question of greatest importance, and it is decided by each pastor and by each layman in his own way. Some urge frequent participation in the Communion, but require worthy preparation; others demand Communion at each service of the Liturgy. There are some believers, though not many, of course, who take Communion every day, others every week, but principally Communion is taken at the great feasts. The exceedingly difficult question of confession which is connected with this movement is also variously solved. Some practice corporate confession; others, though very few, separating the one sacrament from the other, permit participation in the Eucharist without confession. The majority retain confession, obligatory and secret. Thus we see that even in this central question of Church life there appears considerable freedom and the absence of external regulation.

From the Church, from the ritual, there proceed various spiritual streams which feed the customary and family life, but these personal and family fruits of the Church are not easily measured. Among some you will see the revival of Orthodox customs, elsewhere you will see rooms made into oratories and apartments into monasteries. In the noise of the great cities, along with monstrous "godless" demonstrations, there is blazing the fire of ascetic and spiritual

life. Private prayer, sometimes prayer meetings, complement worship in the church.

As is well known, national shrines and monasteries throughout the whole of Russia have been desecrated and destroyed. But it is probably not known to all that this destruction was not complete. As heretofore, in the summer time, pilgrims go on foot to the shrine of St. Seraphim,[1] and to Kiev for Assumption. Sometimes there appear new centres of pilgrimage, as in Podolia, where a vision of the Crucifixion served as the occasion for a great movement of pilgrims. The need for miracles, the thirst for visions of heavenly mysteries, is still strong in all ranks of Church people, though it was especially marked during the years of persecution and famine. At that time one frequently heard of visions, prophecies, or miraculous signs. It was during this period that there occurred in Southern Russia the renovating of ikons and cupolas, and the appearance in the village of Kolomensk, near Moscow, of the Ikon of the Sovereign Virgin, symbolically receiving the crown of the last Russian Tsar.

The monastic idea, which a short time ago seemed to belong to the past ages, is again growing popular. Not all monasteries have been closed. Here and there they still exist under the name of "labouring communities," some even in the capital itself. Others have been converted into institutions where aged cripples and invalids are allowed to pass the remainder of their lives as custodians and keepers of sacred objects and relics that have been declared to be objects of art worthy of preservation by the existing Govern-

[1] In April, 1927, the monastery at Sarow was closed, and the relics of St. Seraphim removed to an unknown destination.

ment. In some places young novices are accepted into monastic life with the customary ceremony, but taking no other vows than to be prepared to suffer and to be crucified for the world. These monasteries attract many, but monastic life is to-day possible for only a few. So the ascetic ideal seeks a new outlet, which is found by uniting in lay communities while still living the life of the world. These groups keep in close touch with the Church, but are not in the same degree under the guidance of the clergy.

Even "startchestvo"[1] has passed beyond the confines of monastic walls. Sometimes a parish priest famous for his ascetic life and deep spiritual insight becomes known as a "staretz." Not infrequently he is a priest deprived of his parish by the Soviet authorities. Such men wield great influence over large numbers of people. These non-monastic startzy occupy somewhat the place of father-confessors to their followers. Their influence, which is more widespread than formerly, must be regarded as a new feature of Russian life.

The influence of father-confessors is not limited to the sacrament of confession, but occasionally, directing the whole of life in all its daily difficulties and trials, the father-confessor becomes the director of conscience.

The ascetic and mystical strain is particularly noticeable in modern religious tendencies. It is evident, for instance, in the attraction which laymen

[1] Startchestvo: the institution or custom of turning for spiritual guidance to aged and particularly venerated monks, popularly known as "startzy," famous for saintliness and spiritual gifts.

find in the ascetic literature of the early Church. However, this tendency is not the only, perhaps not the dominating one, for along with it there is active, practical Christianity, finding various forms. Occasionally it bears the character of Orthodox "evangelism," giving primacy to active love. Under present conditions such evangelic love is closely related to the regeneration of the apostolic ideal—preaching the Gospel. You meet many people, touchingly selfless, who give themselves entirely over to the task of saving their brothers, sowing the Word of Life, and laying up nothing for the morrow.

And, finally, among the Christian intelligentzia, there is particularly strong the demand for the incarnation of Christianity in practice, not in personal life so much as in general cultural work. There arise questions, certainly not new, concerned with the Christianizing of culture, with the possibility or practicability of this endeavour, regarding the future of the Church and the fate of theocracy. Here we find the continual development of subjects presented by Vladimir Solovieff, and growing out of his theological school. Various answers are, of course, given, just as the attitudes towards these questions are various—from the apocalyptic view, expecting a cataclysmic end of the world and paradoxically rejecting all problems of culture, up to the optimistic acceptance of the new life (in Russia, that created by the revolution) as the foundation on which to build a new Christian society.

If, on the one hand, there is a lively interest in questions of social and national life, on the other, for the mystically inclined intelligentizia the more

characteristic questions are those of dogmatic theology (for example, the dogma of redemption), problems connected with "imyaslavchestvo,"[1] which though not disturbing the Church, and not affecting the masses, has yet attracted many followers in theologically authoritative circles. But interests are interwoven. Even the mystics are necessarily obliged to determine for themselves—even though negatively—their attitude towards culture, and among the socially active there is a great attraction in ascetic problems.

Christian thought suffers more than Christian life from severe oppression. The Word is in fetters, intercourse between individuals very limited. We know that many write without any hope that they will see their books published. This gives an exclusive importance to oral teaching. The pulpit, also bound by official fetters, cannot satisfy the great thirst, though it has given birth to many remarkable preachers. Among them we witness the tendencies of which we have already spoken as existing in the whole Church—ethical questions and questions regarding apologetics are the prevalent ones. The vacancy that cannot be filled by public speech is often satisfied by private intercourse. At the present moment it has reached in Russia a very high degree of intensity. It often manifests itself in corporate prayers; the absence of scientific organization is supplemented by the intensity of religious fervour. In such an atmosphere even abstract differences of opinion and theoretical disputes—very hot sometimes—do not generally pro-

[1] That is, mystical realism, renewing the theological movement (St. Gregory Palama) of the fourteenth century in the Byzantine Church, in which the *name* of God was worshipped.

duce any ill-feeling, any inner separation; do not stand in the way of a brotherly communion between people of very different points of view. Life in the midst of a Church that is persecuted, life in the midst of Christ's enemies, face to face with schism, constant communion in the same divine service and in the sacraments—all this produces a feeling of great unity even among those following different tendencies and possessing different religious opinions.

With this voice from Russia we conclude our scattered notes. The time for objective history has not yet come. The most important material is still kept in archives. No one of our contemporaries has yet shared his personal recollections. Herein lies the excuse for the numerous gaps and inaccuracies of the present work, which can only pretend to serve as an outline for future investigations.

APPENDIX

THESE pages had already been written when, in the summer of 1927, there took place events which may mark the beginning of a new era in the life of the Church in Russia. The Metropolitan Sergius, temporary *locum tenens*, being released from prison on July 29, addressed an encyclical to the Church, from which it is evident that, as a result of his negotiations with the Soviet Government, the latter has agreed to register a new "Tikhon" Synod attached to the *locum tenens*, thereby giving recognition to a central organization for the Tikhon Church. Furthermore, it became known that the Metropolitan Sergius is endeavouring to secure legalization for the diocesan administrations, the Church schools, a Church Press, and permission to proceed with the election of a new Patriarch at an All-Russian Sobor. In a word, some sort of a concordat seems to be in formation between the Church and the Soviet Government.

The Metropolitan Sergius in the above-mentioned encyclical, which is countersigned by seven bishops, members of the new Patriarchal (Tikhon) Synod, calls upon the faithful, especially the clergy, to show loyalty in their attitude towards the U.S.S.R. and its Government, and condemns the terroristic acts of counter-revolutionaries. Referring particularly to the representatives of the Church in emigration, the Metropolitan Sergius proposes that they certify to

their political loyalty (to the Soviet Government) or drop their adherence to the Moscow Patriarchate.

Certain expressions in this epistle have created confusion and provided occasion for saying, especially abroad, that the Tikhon Church has broken up, in the sense of capitulation before the Bolsheviks. At present it is impossible to estimate the significance and the consequences of this important action. But from what we already know, it is clear that to speak of capitulation is not in order. The Metropolitan Sergius more than a year ago conducted negotiations with the authorities regarding the legalization of the Church, following out the testament of the deceased Patriarch. In the course of these negotiations he presented the authorities with various projected declarations, of which the best known was the so-called "Appeal of the Orthodox bishops from the Solovetzk Islands to the Government of the U.S.S.R." In this appeal, in the name of the exiles, the undeserved persecution of the Church was denounced and the nature of its present position was painted in clear outline: complete loyalty in political and social questions, and an uncompromising attitude towards the materialistic spirit of Communism. It is beyond question that this declaration best of all expresses the real attitude of the Russian Church towards the Government. The unduly sharp political expressions in the final redaction of the encyclical of the Metropolitan Sergius evidently represent insertions similar to the same kind of expressions found in the last proclamation of the Patriarch Tikhon.

The Russian Church is making great sacrifices in questions of personal and political dignity, but this

does not make it the servant of the authorities. A great gulf separates the "loyalty" of the Patriarch Tikhon and the Metropolitan Sergius from the servility of the Renovated.

It is another question as to how far this step, taken by the Metropolitan Sergius, will be crowned with success—*i.e.*, is the Government willing to cease the régime of persecution and to give the Church a peaceful existence? The future will show this. But even in case of failure attending the step taken by the Metropolitan Sergius, it will retain its significance, one of the stages on the way to a concordat between the Church and the State.

Naturally the Russian emigration was unable to present a united answer to the appeal for "loyalty" proceeding from the Metropolitan Sergius. It divided on this question. The Metropolitan Eulogius (Paris), appointed by the Patriarch Tikhon as the head of the Churches in Western Europe, gave for himself, as well as in the name of his clergy, the signature demanded regarding loyalty, in the sense of not participating in political affairs. The Balkan bishops, grouping themselves around the Metropolitan Anthony and the so-called Karlovtzy Synod (Jugoslavia) with equal decisiveness cut themselves off from Metropolitan Sergius. Incidentally, this only widened the schism in the emigration which for a long time has separated the Metropolitan Eulogius and the Metropolitan Anthony on this very fundamental question: the non-participation in politics on the part of the Church, and the recognition of inner unity between the Church in the emigration and the Church in Russia.

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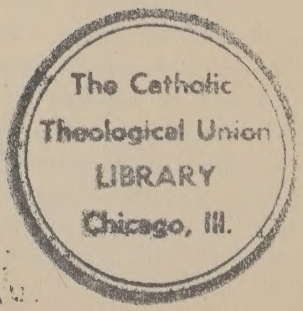

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